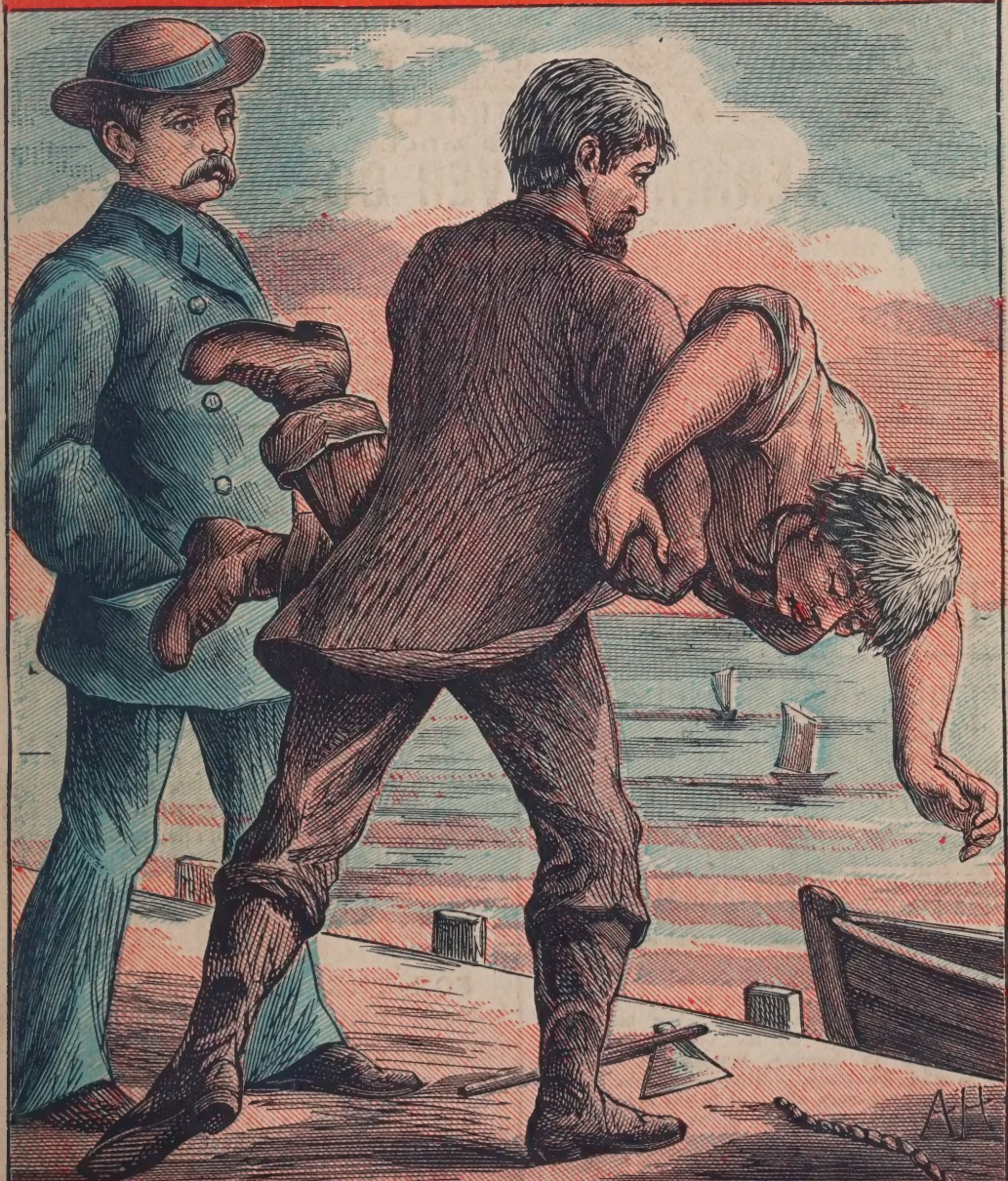
THE HOUSEHOLD SKELETON

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.



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THE

HOUSEHOLD SKELETON.

BY

GEO. L. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF

"THE BRIGAND PRIEST," "TALES OF THE INQUISITION,"
"DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA," ETC.

"There is a skeleton in every household!"

Old Saying.

WARD, LOCK AND CO.
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THE HOUSEHOLD SKELETON.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE SKELETON.

SEA CLIFF! Such was the appropriate name that Captain Manly had given to the home which he had selected for a safe and permanent anchorage after a long life of vicissitudes passed upon the perilous deep. The location had pleased his fancy, and he purchased the land, and erected an elegant habitation upon the cliff which faced the sea. It rose from the waters a sheer elevation crested by a grove of pines, towering oaks, and cedars. The cliff exposed its yellow sides—seamed with strata of black clay, made so by the action of mineral springs, which were slowly undermining it—boldly to the free winds which seemed to love to linger in its crest of trees. Huge mosses, bearing downward with them skeleton trees, which extended their leafless branches as if vainly imploring aid, lay at its base, in fantastic forms, along the pebbly beach that the waves washed with an ever-murmuring song of gladness.

The white house, with pillared balconies upon two sides, nestled among the trees, commanding a beautiful prospect. In the distance, over a long stretch of yellow sand, sparsely touched with sea green, could be seen the ocean. In front lay Raritan Bay. To the left gleamed the bright window panes and white houses of South Amboy. Across the bay was Staten Island, its shore line fading in the distance, while to the left lay the little fishing town of Keyport. Ocean steamers passed like spectres in the distance, whilst the white sails of the "oyster fleet" flitted in the bay like a flock of snowy-winged birds.

It was the old sailor's delight to sit upon the balcony, which looked seaward, and contemplate the lovely landscape which lay so invitingly before his eyes; and when the sun shone brightly, and the undulating waves danced in his genial warmth, it was a scene calculated to attune the soul in harmony with nature's loveliness, and make man forget the toils, anxieties, and bitter-

ness of worldly strife. And as the pure breeze toyed with his thin locks, almost silver in their whiteness, Nelson Manly felt a calm, serene, and quiet sense of happiness steal over his whole being.

There was no reason why he should not be happy. Fortune had been lavish in her smiles. There were people in Keyport who still remembered when he had left the village a poor lad—leaving his sister and only relative, for they had been orphaned at an early age, to the care of Mrs. Kohog—to seek his fortune in New York.

Years passed on, and he who had begun his career as common seaman became the captain of a noble barque. He withdrew his sister from the care of Mrs. Kohog, much to the regret of the worthy fisherman's wife, to place her in a fashionable seminary. He was determined to make a lady of her.

After this, very little was heard of Nelson Manly, though there came a rumour of his sister having eloped from the seminary where he had placed her, and thrown herself away to ruin; but the truth of the matter was never ascertained, and in the course of time the Manlys were almost forgotten. Great was the surprise, therefore, when Captain Manly, an old man of sixty, came back to his native village, purchased Sea Cliff, two miles distant, built the house I have described, and expressed a determination to end his days where they began.

When his early associates, now old men, questioned him, he freely revealed the adventurous career by which he had amassed his wealth; but when one casually inquired what had become of his sister, his brow darkened, the thin lips quivered, a fierce glare came in the dark blue eyes, so habitual in their mildness, and his whole aspect changed. He told them she was dead, and that was all, becoming moody and absent, and scant in words. So it became an understood thing that Nelson did not wish to be questioned about his sister. From this, those who remembered the old story shrewdly surmised there was some truth in it.

The matter of the sister was set aside as something not to be spoken of, but there was another that puzzled the gossips exceedingly. Nelson had brought home with him a lovely girl of seventeen, whom he presented to his friends as his daughter. Strangely enough, this girl bore the same name as his sister, Cecilia. No one had ever heard of Nelson's marriage: there was no great marvel in that, though they made one of it; he had been so long away, he could have been married and raised a family without their knowing anything about it.

The girl was certainly enough like him to be his. She had the same mild blue eye, and her abundant tresses of golden brown were very like the crispy locks of Nelson, before time had silvered them. It is true, there was great dissimilarity in the other features—Cecilia's being in a more refined and intellectual cast—but she could have taken that from her mother.

Nor was Nelson Manly more communicative in regard to his wife than his sister. The subject seemed equally distasteful to him. She also was dead, but when or where she died he did not choose to communicate. The old women tried to extract some information from Cecilia, but they were completely at fault there. Cecilia could not remember that she had ever seen her mother. Her earliest recollection was a family in New York by whom she had been reared, an occasional visit from her father, and the boarding school where she had completed her education, and from which she had been withdrawn to take up her residence at Sea Cliff.

The girl was delighted with her new home, and the constant association with her father. His visits to her had been the bright spots in her lonely existence. Never was father more beloved, and never had father a more gentle and dutiful child. The old sailor lived only for her: she was his greatest treasure.

So they settled down to their quiet life at Sea Cliff without gratifying the curiosity of their neighbours, which the gossips highly resented. It was like taking a house without exchanging "references."

Nelson Manly arranged his household by taking Philinda Kohog as housekeeper. Philinda was the eldest daughter of Mrs. Kohog—now no more, having pined away after the loss of her husband, who was drowned in a storm. She had left three girls, Philinda, as I have said, being the eldest. Philinda's sisters married stout oystermen, and settled down contentedly to their destinies, but Philinda was uncalled for. She had borne the unmistakable spinster mark from her cradle. It was written legibly in her angular features, her sharp gray eye, her red hair, which no plausibility could transform to "auburn," and her thin and bony frame.

She had been her mother's right hand while she lived, and on her death was a second mother to her sisters until they married. Her heart was a good one, and full of tenderness, though the rind was somewhat rough and her temper acidulous. Few cared to encounter her tongue a second time, for she was blessed with a volubility strongly tinctured with caustic. A ready tongue and shrewd wit had Philinda Kohog. Finding

her floating about the village, doing "odd jobs" first in one family and then in another, the oracle of her circle, Nelson Manly engaged her to superintend his house at Sea Cliff. Philinda accepted, and was soon in her glory. In three months she had the whole institution "under her thumb." She was the mistress almost as much as if the house had been her own; but never monarch ruled so gently, or made his sway less oppressive, and never yielded subjects so readily.

Nelson was pleased with her for her tact in management, the skill with which she ministered to his taste, and the air of comfort and neatness which she evoked around her, whilst Cecilia gradually grew to love her. The poor child had never known a mother's fostering care, and Philinda more than supplied the place of one. The housemaids and farm-labourers detested and feared her, of course. She kept them sharply at their work, berating them with an unsparing tongue when she found them negligent. There was no appeal against her. If any one wished to remain at Sea Cliff, they must obtain the good graces of Philinda. So insidiously had this authority been usurped, that Nelson Manly never dreamed that he had so completely yielded up the sway of his household. Nor would it have troubled him much if he had discovered it. She saved him a world of care; was like a mother to Cecilia; made him comfortable, and pleased him. As long as she left him the "quarter deck," as he would have phrased it, he cared little what she did "below."

A year had passed away since Captain Manly had taken up his residence at Sea Cliff, and by that time the young men of the neighbourhood had discovered what a pretty girl Cecilia was, and were most anxious to make her acquaintance, but to accomplish this they were obliged to conciliate a dragon that stood in the way: that dragon was Philinda Kohog. She knew the history of every family, root and branch, for ten miles around, and was determined that Cecilia should associate with none but the first stock; for somehow, since her domiciliation at Sea Cliff, Philinda had become quite aristocratic in her notions, and considered the family in which she resided as the cream of society, and Captain Manly as the great man of the locality. Nor was she alone in this opinion, for the neighbours, swayed by the evidences of Captain Manly's wealth, so unostentatiously displayed in his style of living, looked upon him as a man of mark, and unconsciously yielded him a certain degree of deference.

Nelson Manly lived in good old country style. He kept his

carriages and horses, not forgetting a gentle one for Cecilia to ride. He rented a pew in the most popular church in the village, which he, Cecilia, and Philinda, attended regularly every Sabbath, being driven there in his carriage by Abe Brown, his principal farm hand. His manners were always bland, social, and agreeable. He had a kind word for all, and assumed no superiority over his neighbours on account of his wealth. His benevolence was unbounded, and his charities bestowed with an unstinting hand. Though offered a voice in the government of the little village, he declined, being too old, he said, and weather-beaten, to perform the duties of a public officer; but for all that, on all mooted points his advice was invariably sought for.

His appearance, too, was so full of dignity and goodness. Tall in stature, unbent by the weight of years, still robust and hardy, with a firm, unshaking tread, features almost classic in their contour, a broad, smooth brow, unseamed by care or the furrows that evil passions plough so deeply, locks of silvery whiteness and silken texture floating back from the massive forehead, and a mild blue eye, beaming with geniality, made Nelson Manly appear the very portraiture of noble and virtuous old age. No wonder the villagers regarded him in the light of a superior being.

It had been a hot day in July: the sun had shed down intense rays of heat all day, and what little wind there had been had seemed to come from a furnace; but, now the sun had sunk beneath the hills, leaving a blazon of gold and purple on the bannered clouds to mark his setting, a cool breeze had come, laden with the crisp, salty breath of the sea. Nelson Manly came out on his favourite balcony to view the prospect, and invigorate his lungs with the welcome sea air. Philinda Kohog drew a chair beside him, and sat down with her sewing in her lap. This was their usual custom of an evening after tea.

The sound of laughing voices came up to them on the wings of the wind, attracting their attention. Glancing in the direction of the voices, they beheld a lovely picture. On the verge of the cliff, under the oaks, sat a young girl, looking like the dryad of the grove. She was robed in white, fleecy and gossamer-like; her golden curls fell in masses upon her neck and shoulders from under a coronal of oak-leaves, the dark green of the leaves contrasting richly with the golden sheen of her hair. Stretched at full length beside her, his head supported by his elbow, on the turf lay a young man, gazing at her with the look of deepest admiration, so strong as to be perceptible even at the distance from which Captain Manly looked.

He was about five years, apparently, the senior of the girl, and in figure was very unlike the young men of the neighbourhood, having an air of city breeding. His clothes, though worn with careless ease, were of fashionable cut, and his boots, of faultless shape and fit, were of polished leather. He had a frank, open face, and a sunny smile. His features were delicate, almost effeminate. His complexion was pale, his eyes and hair black, and he wore a little silky moustache of the same colour.

It was evident from their position that he had just crowned the girl with the oak-leaves, and was enjoying the effect. Captain Manly seemed strangely moved by this artless picture. The upturned face of the youth was plainly visible from where he sat, and the sight of it appeared greatly to interest him.

"Who is that young man?" he asked. "I have never seen him here before."

"I want to know?" answered Philinda. "That is strange, too, for he has been here pretty often in the last fortnight. And you don't see anything in his face that puts you in mind of old times?"

"I certainly do see something," replied Captain Manly musingly; "a resemblance, as it were, that grates unpleasantly upon my mind in connection with Cecilia's sunny face."

"Well, that is strange again," said Philinda, shaking her head sagely, and taking short, quick stitches; "for that young man is the son of one of your oldest and best friends."

"Oldest and best friends?" echoed Captain Manly, turning an inquiring glance upon her.

"Yes; that is Justin Carnham, the son of Hobart Carnham."

The captain uttered a shrill cry, and sank back in his chair. Philinda dropped her work and sprang to his assistance.

"It is nothing," he said feebly. "Another sudden attack of those spasms. Get me the cordial, please. A few drops will quickly restore me."

Philinda hastened for the cordial. She was seriously alarmed. Though the captain had assured her that it was nothing, her experienced eye had told her to the contrary. He had turned ghastly pale, and was trembling in every limb. She remembered his having just such a turn once before. It was their first Sunday at church, when glancing around she had observed a neighbour watching them with more than ordinary scrutiny.

"Mercy's sake!" she had said to Nelson, "do see how Hobart Carnham is looking at Cecilia. 'Pears to me as if he wanted to eat her up."

The captain turned as if to look, but sank back deadly pale

and gasping. He did not recover entirely throughout the whole service, and at the end of it was obliged to be assisted to his carriage. The suddenness of the attack, and want of curatives at the time, baffled the penetration of Philinda, and alarmed her considerably. The captain laughed at her fears—said it was only "spasms," and that he was subject to them, and so the affair was forgotten for a time. But here was another attack, quite as sudden and violent as the first. Philinda cogitated to herself as she hurried back with the cordial.

"'Pears to me," she reflected, "that if the captain aint mighty keerful, them spasms will be the death of him. I'd take a doctor's advice if I was him."

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSSIP OF PHILINDA.

When Philinda reached the captain with the cordial, he no longer required it. The spasm had passed away, and she found him perfectly recovered.

"Thanks, Philinda," he said; "I do not need the cordial now: the pain has passed away."

"But it may come again," urged the housekeeper. "'An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.' Better take it; who knows but you may have another attack. Come, just drink it up; 'taint very bitter. It will do you good."

The captain took the glass something in the same manner that a child might receive it from the hands of a nurse,—not that he wanted it, but knew not how to avoid it,—drank a small portion of its contents, and handed back the glass to Philinda. That prudent woman finished it at a draught, to prevent its being wasted, as she said, and replaced the glass in the chamber. Then she came back, and resumed her sewing beside the captain.

"Captain," she began, "'pears to me you oughter do something for them spasms."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the captain absently, his thoughts far away.

"Yes; like as not one of these days one of them might prove fatal."

"I think not."

"That's what people always think when anything is the

matter with them," cried Philinda snappishly. "They go on from day to day thinking nothing serious will come of their ailments, until death steps in, and then it's too late."

"I should think so," smiled the captain.

"Oh! you may laugh, but it is no laughing matter, I can tell you. You are not so old, captain, but I daresay you would like to live a little longer."

"Death has no terrors for me, Philinda," answered the captain. "I have lived a long term of years, passed through many dangers from which an all-wise Providence has delivered me; and when it pleases that same Providence to call me hence, I shall answer the summons unshrinkingly. I have kept a fair log; my conscience is clear; I shall not dread the great reckoning."

"Sartinly not, captain, sartinly not," responded Philinda approvingly. "You've been a good man, as everybody knows; and that is the very reason why you ought to try and live just as long as you can, for good men are scarce enough in this world, the Lord knows! Now, if you will take a fool's advice, you will consult Doctor Fennel."

That was a pet phrase with Philinda, "take a fool's advice,"—there was so much humility in it, such a supreme abnegation of self; but if any body had called Philinda a "fool" she would have been highly indignant, as she rather prided herself on her strong practical common sense.

The captain demurred somewhat at the idea of sending for a doctor, but his objections were instantly and decidedly overruled by the strong will of his housekeeper, and, to avoid an interminable discussion, he yielded, and consented to call in the Doctor. Having carried her point, Philinda resumed her sewing triumphantly.

Again the merry voices came up from below. Cecilia and Justin were singing a duet together, and their voices floated on the still evening air in harmonious unison.

"So, that is the son of Hobart Carnham?" said Captain Manly musingly. "I was not aware he had a son."

"Mercy's sakes! to be sure he has—and you never heard of it? Well, that is strange too! Why, you used to be great friends in your young days, you and Hobart, though he was better off in the world than yourself. He came into the Carnham property after you left, though folks do say there won't be much of it for young Justin when the 'Squire dies—he's a 'Squire now: 'spose you didn't know that nuther? Hobart always was a wild, harum-scarum sort of fellow, and though he

was sent to College, didn't 'pear to do him much good. I wonder you haven't called to see him,—such good friends as you used to be."

"He has not called to see me yet," returned the captain with a strange smile. "However, I have no desire to renew the acquaintance. The lapse of years has made a great difference in our relative positions."

"S'pose so. You're better off than he is now. It's a pity 'Squire Carnham don't take a little more care of his worldly goods for the sake of his son Justin, who is just as likely a lad as there is hereabouts—a little fanciful and dandified, mayhap, but that is all owing to his having been brought up in New York, which is a heathenish kind of place, as you know. They say the boy takes his delicate looks from his mother. She was a fine city lady, and worth considerable money, and nation proud, too, I tell you. She used to give herself all kinds of French airs when she came down here, and snuff up our air as if it wasn't fit to breathe. None of our folks liked her, but they ran after her for all that, because she had plenty of money, and wore dresses—splendid ones they were, too—all in the latest fashion. She wouldn't let me make her dresses: I wasn't fashionable enough for her; but I used to get her patterns—she was very accommodating that way—and make dresses for the ninnies who were anxious to imitate her. I made all the baby dresses for her when Justin was born: she was too ladyfied to sew a stitch herself—and a fine boy he was, though rather small: weighed only five pounds."

With this piece of domestic intelligence Philinda paused, drew a long breath, and resumed her sewing diligently, to make up for lost time.

"So Hobart Carnham married well off?" said Captain Manly thoughtfully; "and how many children did he have?"

"Only this one,—Justin. Shortly after his birth Mrs Carnham went back to New York: this place was too dull for her, she said—she was a fly-away, I tell you. She caught cold going to a ball, took to her bed, and never left it alive—went off just like the snuff of a candle. Hobart came back here after that, and was quite steady for a while, but he soon took to his old courses. Dreadful times, they say, he had up at the old homestead, carousing from morning till night, and all through the night to the next morning. It is a wonder to me how he's ever lived through it—but liquor don't seem to have any more effect on him than so much water. That ain't the case with Sam Cully."

"Sam Cully?" interrupted the captain. "I remember him—a likely young fellow. Is he still in the village?"

"Still here—more shame for him and it. Why, he has become a regular sot and loafer, and all through Hobart Carnham."

"Indeed! how so?"

"Why, you see, Sam would never be content to stick to the position for which natur' intended him, and work the good old farm as his father had done before him, but was always hankering after fine society, and wanting to see life. The Squire wanting a chum, and Sam being a good natur'd, lively sort of fellow, he took him in hand to make a gentleman of him. So Sam let out his farm and followed Hobart to New York, where he soon learned to smoke and drink, and play billiards, and other unchristian-like practices, which was Sam's idea of being a gentleman. And pretty work Sam made of it. It takes a long spoon to sup with the devil, you know, and Sam's spoon was not as long as the Squire's: he wasted all his means, his farm was sold under the hammer by the sheriff, and now Sam is a poor drunken vagrant, only kept out of the almshouse by the Squire's bounty—for, strangely enough, they are still as thick as two peas in a pod. But they quarrel every now and then. In his sober moments—if a man whose brains are so completely muddled can be said ever to be sober—Sam is very bitter against the Squire, and accuses him of having caused his ruin, and swears he'll make him pay for it one of these days, but the next time they meet Hobart asks him to take a drink; Sam can't refuse; over their liquor they soon become the best friends in the world, and the upshot of it is,—the Squire walks home with an unsteady gait, leaving poor Sam dead drunk, to be put to bed by the landlord, who darsn't turn him into the street for fear of losing his license. And so it has gone on for years. Mercy only knows how he has lived through it, but some men have the constitution of a hoss!"

Philinda sighed, caught her breath again, and resumed her sewing vigorously.

"Poor Cully!" exclaimed the captain feelingly. "It is a sad picture you have drawn, Philinda. The thirst for drink with some men is an insanity against which the reasoning and advice of friends is of no avail. Cully is one of this kind. I remember him well, a hardy, robust farmer lad, but with an easy, yielding temper, and a badly-balanced mind. I do not wonder that he could not resist the association with Hobart Carnham. I also remember him well." The captain set his teeth together, as if chilled by the breeze, and his words came

grating through them. "A showy, dashing young fellow, well-bred and polished, possessing a strange fascinating manner that made him friends wherever he went, for he had the peculiar faculty of adapting himself to all dispositions. A man of the world, living for the world, caring only for the gratification of the present moment, with no thought for the morrow, gay, reckless, liberal, extravagant, and thoroughly selfish and heartless! No wonder such a man should dazzle and mislead a simple country youth like Samuel Cully. Would that were the least of his evil doing."

"Mercy's sakes! captain, what do you mean?" asked Philinda, all agog for information. "Do you know of anything else that Hobart Carnham has been doing?"

"What should I know?" he returned quite abruptly. "I surmised, as is but natural, that Sam Cully is not his only victim. Poor Sam, the unhappy victim of his uncontrolled passions, is now a despised vagrant, shunned by all, whilst Hobart Carnham—more guilty, because heaven gave him a mind and perception to judge between good and evil—is still respected, still holds his position in the world. There is something radically wrong in the whole strata of society. Here is a man who uses his talents and his means to blight and ruin his fellow beings, and yet society has no punishment for such a man. He gilds his vices with gold, and the majority suffer his association. The man who kills the mind, or destroys a reputation, is as much a murderer as he who slays the body; but the law is powerless to reach him, and he lives in ease and laughs at those whom he has injured. What can be done with such a man?"

"Leave him to heaven," answered Philinda, solemnly. "'The way of the transgressor is hard,' and though to our feeble vision he may appear to escape punishment here, no one knows what a conscience he may have locked up in his own breast, and wouldn't let the world see for all its biting: there is a great day of reckoning coming which he can't escape!"

"Right, Philinda," returned the captain with conviction. "'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' It is not for weak mortals to usurp heaven's high prerogative. Scarcely any wrong can justify individual redress, though it may be hard at times for human nature to endure a wrong—and there are wrongs which fire the blood and turn men into fiends—yet it is better to submit to the great *Umpire*, who, sooner or later, will redress all wrongs!"

"Amen!" said Philinda with great unction. "I declare, captain, it is just as good as a sermon to hear you talk."

Philinda's fervent response was the step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and the captain laughed involuntarily.

"I had no idea," he exclaimed, with a resumption of his usual tone and manner, "that we were getting so serious and metaphysical. To return to the subject from which we have wandered so strangely—this young Carnham. I am anxious to learn something about him. Does he at all resemble his father?"

"Not an atom, neither in looks nor disposition. He's as sober as a judge, and as well-spoken a boy as you would ever want to see. Mercy knows who he takes after, for he aint a bit like either father or mother, though he looks enough like her, but I mean in disposition. He's been away from home 'most all his life, living with his mother's folks in New York, who are nation proud of him, but for two or three years he has been at the Pollytecknical Institoot in Troy, studying to be a civil engineer."

"The Polytechnic Institute in Troy?"

"Yes, that's it. It's vacation now, and he has come home to have a good time—fishing, and such like."

"And he has just made the acquaintance of Cecilia?"

"Yes; he came over to see me. I used to take care of him when he was a babe. He's very fond of me, and comes here quite often."

Simple Philinda! with all your shrewdness you had not yet discovered that Cecilia Manly was the magnet that attracted Justin Carnham to Sea Cliff.

"How is Cecilia pleased with him?" asked Captain Manly with apparent carelessness.

"Tolerably. She must like him: you know he is so much superior to any of the young fellows hereabouts."

The captain looked blankly at the distant sea.

"Of all things," he muttered, "I least expected this. It must be checked at once."

"What must be checked?" asked Philinda, who indistinctly caught his words.

"We must prevent Cecilia and Justin Carnham from falling in love with each other," returned the captain decidedly.

"Mercy's sakes!" exclaimed Philinda; "how are you going to do that? If he takes a notion to her and she to him, you might as well attempt to walk up the side of a house as try to stop it."

"We must find a way; prevent their meeting; break the acquaintance before it be too late. I tell you, Philinda, under

no consideration can Cecilia ever become the wife of Justin Carnham."

"On account of the father, I suppose?"

"That is one reason; there are others," was the evasive reply.

"Now look here, captain; don't attempt to put your finger in this pie, because if you do you will spoil it, as sure as fate. Just tell that young couple that they mustn't love each other, and in two days you'll have the strongest case of love you ever saw. Let 'em alone, and they may never think of it. At all events, just you let the matter rest in my hands, and I'll fix things."

CHAPTER III.

THE HERO APPEARS.

"THEN you like Sea Cliff?" said Justin Carnham, as he lay at Cecilia's feet, after crowning her with the oak leaves, gazing up at her lovely face.

"Oh yes; it is grand here!" she replied with enthusiasm. "I love to watch the heaving water, and the little ships skimming like birds over its surface. There is a never-ceasing variety in the prospect of which one never tires. Nor does the fine weather alone please me: we have a storm now and then to vary the monotony—one would get tired of everlasting sunshine, you know. A storm is my great delight. It is sublime to sit here in perfect safety, and see the mad waves dash their foam against the clayey bank, whilst the trees upon the verge of the cliff tremble and nod beneath the concussion."

"The prospect from this cliff is indeed lovely," responded Justin, "whether in storm or sunshine. It used to be my delight to paddle around this bay in a little dory when I was a lad, but I was soon sent to the great city, and have almost forgotten my youthful sports, I have been away so long. I love to come down here in the vacation, if only to breathe the pure, fresh air. It is very dull at our house, however, and you can fancy my surprise and pleasure, upon visiting Sea Cliff to see my old friend Philinda Kohog, on discovering that I had such a charming little neighbour. I have crowned you Queen of the Cliff; and here I am at your feet, a leal and most devoted subjec"

Cecilia laughed gaily a free and artless laugh, without any affectation.

"That is the way with you city gentlemen," she cried; "you are always stringing fine words together to compliment us rustic maidens and turn our simple heads; but I know something of city life, though I was country bred, and am proof against your flowery speeches."

"Believe me," returned Justin, earnestly, "you are the last person to whom I would address a fulsome compliment. Suffer me, however, to be a little poetical before I settle down to the dull routine of business, the surroundings here are so congenial to the muse. My course of study is over, and in the fall I must commence the active business of life."

"Do you know I envy you?"

"Indeed, and wherefore?"

"The pleasure of a contact with the busy, bustling scenes of life. My worldly experience has been very limited, reared as I was in a country village far apart from cities. Doris and I,—Doris was Mrs. Woodland's youngest daughter, she was the lady with whom I lived while my father was absent upon those long voyages to foreign lands,—Doris and I were nearly of the same age, and soon became great friends. We used to wonder what the great world beyond our narrow circle was like, and feel an adventurous spirit to explore its hidden mystery. Doris, who always had more courage than myself, suggested that we should procure two suits of male attire unknown to any at home, dress ourselves in them, and pay a visit to the city; but I shrank from the perpetration of such a mad freak."

"You were wise; you would have had cause to repent your temerity had you embarked in such an adventure. It was a whimsical idea, however. A lively girl this same Doris; I should like to see her."

"Then you will soon be gratified, for she is coming here on a visit to remain all summer. I expect her every day now. I shall be so delighted when she comes. She is the best friend I have in the world—we always got along so well together. Then she is so different from me,—lively, gay, full of life and animal spirits. Why, she used to keep our boarding-school in a whirl of excitement all the time."

"Did she attend the same boarding-school as yourself?"

"Oh yes; the way of that was, that father, feeling grateful for the kind care I had received at Mrs. Woodland's, and seeing how smart and intelligent Doris naturally was, concluded to have her educated also, and so he sent her to the boarding-

school to keep me company. She soon went ahead of me in her studies, especially in French and music. Why, she played the piano like a professor, and sings like a bird."

"I am quite anxious to see this young lady; your description of her accomplishments has excited my curiosity."

"You will be sure to fall in love with her," laughed Cecilia.

"Do you think so? I do not. Perhaps my heart is already spoken for," said Justin, with a meaning glance. "'Love-proof with love.' I think I can safely defy the fascinations of La Belle Doris, 'Admirable Crichton' as she appears to be."

The words and the glances were unheeded by Cecilia; it was evident she did not understand them, but took their meaning literally. She had one of those simple, straightforward souls on which sophistry is lost, and complimentary insinuations thrown away.

"Oh, if you are in love already," she answered, "of course there will be no chance for Doris to make an impression. It's a great pity, though, for I think you would have liked her so much."

Justin bit his lip. He began to fancy that a cold heart dwelt in that untutored breast. Here he had known her for a fortnight, and had not succeeded in getting up even the least bit of a flirtation. He was rather annoyed at this circumstance, as he was considered a tolerably good-looking fellow, and was an especial pet among the ladies of his circle in the city. In fact, he had been spoiled by their partiality, until he had become a little conceited; consequently it mortified his vanity to think that he had as yet made no impression upon Cecilia Manly, the more so as he felt that he was deeply, desperately in love with her. He deemed her the most beautiful girl he had ever beheld, far transcending in charms his city beauties. It was not so much that she had such a smooth white forehead, beaming eyes of violet blue, and hair like a golden aureola: she had a beauty beyond the charm of feature and complexion, and that was an indescribable spiritual, not to say saintly, expression, which lingered on her face, making it the type of innocence and truth. It needed but one glance at Cecilia's face to convince the gazer that, though she might not possess striking talents or strong force of mind, she was *good*—thoroughly and intrinsically *good!*

Justin Carnham had found this gem in the seclusion of its home, as one finds a pearl within the rough shell of an oyster, claimed the right of a discoverer, and was determined to win her heart and obtain her hand. No thought of her being the heiress

of the fine estate of Sea Cliff obtruded itself upon his mind he was free from all such mercenary considerations; he loved her simply and entirely for herself alone. Rebuffed by ingenuousness, he returned to the subject of Doris.

"Is she pretty, this friend of yours?" he asked.

"Very pretty," replied Cecilia, who seemed to be never tired of praising her friend. "Oh, I know you will like her. She is a perfect little gipsy—not near as tall as I am. She has the blackest hair you ever saw, and it curls naturally, too, in little ringlets all over her head; and the brightest black eyes, just like diamonds; and her complexion is as brown as a berry, with a flush of red in the cheeks, like the bloom of a peach. She is so dark that we used to call her the 'Spaniard' at our boarding-school. But after a while, we were so often together, they used to call us *Day* and *Night*, and so she lost the name of 'Spaniard altogether."

"A modern Di Vernon, I suppose?"

"Exactly. Oh, we shall have such nice times when she comes! She will be the life and soul of every party."

"We will have a sailing party in honour of her arrival," said Justin; "and as here comes Mark Brander up the path, we will speak to him about his boat; I hear that he has just had a new one built. Though quite young, he is said to be the best captain in the bay."

Cecilia looked at the young man as he came up the path with a light, springing step. He was about the medium height, rather slim in figure, but well-proportioned. Crispy brown hair appeared from under the old straw hat he wore, and he had hazel eyes, a long straight nose, a square chin, and thin lips. A brown moustache and beard, quite short in length, covered his upper lip and chin. There was no evidence of beard upon any other part of his face. He wore quite an old suit of clothes, and his pantaloons were tucked into a pair of big boots. His face, neck, and hands were bronzed by the sea and sun to the hue of a Comanche war-chief. He looked quite picturesque as he came up the path whistling a lively air, and holding a string of weak fish in his hand, their silvery scales glancing at every step.

"Halloa, Mark!" shouted Justin, as the path diverged and the fisherman was going towards the house.

Mark turned short around, blushed in some confusion upon seeing Cecilia, and removing his straw hat as he advanced, bowed a little awkwardly.

"Halloa!" returned Mark, not knowing what else to say.

"Been fishing?"

"Yes; pretty good sport; got a dozen weak fish here. Brought them over for the captain: he buys all I catch."

"What lovely fish!" cried Cecilia in admiration. "It seems a pity to catch them. Don't you think it must torture them when the hook pierces their mouths?"

"Lord! miss," answered Mark, "I don't think so. Somehow I never thought fish had much feeling anyhow; but I have been a fisherman all my life, and I suppose that makes me think so. But I have read somewhere,—in Isaac Walton, I believe,—that the sensation of a fish upon the hook was more one of pleasure than pain."

"Bravo, Mark!" laughingly exclaimed Justin; "well deduced and capitally made out; but I think it would take more than mere logic to convince the fish of that fact, Isaac Walton to the contrary, notwithstanding."

"Perhaps so, sir," replied Mark respectfully. "But we find so much sport in fishing that we seldom stop to argue the point."

"Nor will we now. They tell me you have got a boat of your own this summer?"

"Oh yes, sir; I saved all I could scrape together and bought the materials; and farmer Clark having given me permission, I built it in his barn. I had her brought to the water by an ox-team, and launched her only last week."

"Well done. How much, if it is a fair question, did your boat cost you?"

"Seventy dollars, sir."

"Why, that seems quite a reasonable sum," observed Cecilia. "It is a very handsome boat—if that is it which we see down at the pier."

"That is it," rejoined Mark.

"What do you call your boat?" asked Justin.

Mark seemed embarrassed by the question, and cast down his eyes as if intently studying something about the ground, but as Justin repeated the question, he felt compelled to answer.

"I call her *Cecilia!*" he stammered, in a confused kind of way.

"Why, you have named her after me?" cried Cecilia delightedly.

"If you please, miss, yes," answered Mark bashfully.

Justin regarded him with a searching glance: could it be possible that he had a rival in this unsophisticated fisherman? The idea was too preposterous. He had named his boat after

her out of compliment to the family, Captain Manly being his best customer. That was all—there was nothing more in it. Surely a poor boy like him would never dare to raise his eyes to the rich heiress of Sea Cliff! The thought was too absurd to be entertained, and Justin drove it away.

"An excellent selection of name," he exclaimed; "and if your boat at all resembles her godmother, she will be the prettiest craft that sails these waters."

"She is that, sir," answered Mark with honest pride. "I built her myself, and she is a beauty!"

"We want to give her a trial one of these fine days," said Justin. "Miss Manly expects a friend of hers to visit her, and when she comes we must give the ladies a sail on the bay."

"Certainly, sir," responded Mark; "the boat is at Miss Manly's service whenever she requires it."

So saying, he bowed again, replaced his hat, and turned towards the house. The captain hailed him from the balcony.

"Mark Brander, ahoy!" shouts the captain.

"Ay, ay, captain!" answers Mark.

"What luck, my lad?"

"Good—a dozen weak fish—some of them quite large."

"Well done! Give 'em to Bridget—I'll have one boiled for breakfast. How's your mother, Mark?"

"Nicely, sir."

"And Harry?"

"Getting along quite smart, sir."

"What does Doctor Fennel say about him now?"

"Thinks he will recover, and won't be a cripple after all."

"That's good news. Good evening, Mark."

"Good evening, captain."

At the rear door of the house Mark found Philinda awaiting him. She took the fish from him, made him come into the kitchen, asked him innumerable questions about his mother and brother, and finally dismissed him with a pot of jam for his sick brother. Mark went home in a state of considerable elation, principally derived from the fact that he had told Cecilia that his boat was named after her, and she had not seemed offended. The appearance of Justin Carnham beside Cecilia, and apparently upon the most familiar footing, had excited no alarm within his breast. He scarcely knew his own feelings yet, and did not dream that Cecilia's blue eyes had ensnared his heart in life-binding fetters. That truth was yet to dawn upon him. Had any one accused him of being in love with her, he would have repudiated the idea indignantly. What! he, a poor fisher-

man, with a mother and brother to support, to fall in love with the daughter of Captain Manly, who was looked upon by the good people of Keyport as another Crœsus—it would have been the height of presumption! He knew his place better—he admired her, and that was all.

"A likely young fellow that," remarked Justin carelessly, as Mark turned away from them.

"He seems to be very clever," responded Cecilia. "He brings father fish almost every day. He must be very skilful, for he seldom returns empty-handed."

"Then you have seen him before?"

"Oh, yes; quite often."

"Rather good-looking; don't you think so?"

"Is he? I never noticed."

Justin was satisfied. He made his adieu and took his departure, his father's house being about half a mile distant. He had nothing to fear from Mark Brander. Cecilia had never noticed him, and surely would not now that *he* was there. The course was clear: he had only to walk over it.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORY OF MARK BRANDER.

A FEW days after this, while Philinda was busy sewing in the sitting-room, Cecilia brought her crotchet work, and sat down beside her.

"Do you know Mark Brander?" she asked.

"Mercy's sakes! I should think so," responded Philinda, opening her eyes widely at the question. "Why, I've known him ever since he was knee-high."

"He seems an enterprising young man."

"He is that; he's been the main-stay of his mother ever since he was big enough to work. He's just as smart as a steel-trap, and real good to his sick brother. Poor fellow, he was very nigh being killed!"

"How so? what happened to him?"

"Why, he was working in Latimer's store—he was clerk there—and one day going up in the loft for something, he fell through the scuttle-way down on to the floor, and nearly broke himself all to bits. He has never seen a well day since. It is a great pity, for he is a nice fellow, is Harry, smarter in some

ways than Mark. He is more genteel, and more of a scholar. He never took to the sea like Mark—a rough life was never to his liking. He takes after his mother—she is a superior woman —a very superior woman for one in her station. Ah! hers is a strange story, very strange! Some people here pretend not to believe it. That is the way with the world: it never shows any mercy to the unfortunate. But *I* believe it; I know human natur', and am not easily deceived."

The good woman nodded her head sagaciously while she sighted the eye of her needle to insert a new thread, with the precision of an old man-of-war's-man over a pet cannon.

It did not require much questioning to extract from Philinda the strange story of Catherine Brander. We will not follow her in her diffuse and rambling account, intermingled as it was with sage comments and moral dissertations, but narrate the facts as briefly as possible.

At the age of eighteen Catherine Byrne found herself left alone in the world, with the sum of forty pounds bequeathed to her by her dead father; and while she was casting about for the means of procuring a livelihood, she received a letter from a cousin in America, strongly urging her to try her fortunes in that land of promise. Her resolution was at once taken. She had no ties to bind her to her native Glasgow—no friends to leave behind, no pleasant memories to tear asunder—for hers had been a toilsome life in the little habitation she had kept in order for her father, a poor weaver, ever since her mother's death. So she made the few preparations necessary for her departure; took passage, at the cheapest rate, in an emigrant ship bound for New York; and quitted her native land without one feeling of regret.

On the contrary, she rather looked forward with pleasurable anticipations to the destiny which awaited her in the new land where so many of her countrymen had realized an independence in a short time. Her cousin, Archibald Byrne, had often written them, giving glowing descriptions of his prosperity, and urging Catherine and her father to give up their toilsome life in Scotland, and emigrate to the new world, where labour, and particularly his trade, was in demand, and where it was remunerated so much better than in their own labour-stocked country. But Harry Byrne, Catherine's father, was not to be dazzled by these bright promises. His long, treadmill existence had deadened all energy within him. A patient drudge, he had no wish to move out of his narrow sphere. He was too old, he said, for so long a journey—it would be like tearing up an old tree by the roots—the transplanting would be the death of him.

Catherine would not desert her father; and so she remained with him until the cord snapped, and the poor weaver's life was spun to the last thread. Then, when her cousin wrote again, she received the proposal with joy, and embarked for America.

She formed only one of a large party, adventurers, like herself, in quest of fortune, on board the ship "Good Speed." In a few days that dread scourge of the ocean to the inexperienced voyager, sea-sickness, passed away; and, as the weather was delightful, and the sea almost as smooth as a looking-glass, she passed the greatest portion of her time on deck, enjoying the novelty and strangeness of her position.

A winsome lass was Catherine Byrne, although she was scarce conscious of the fact. The life of seclusion she had led in her devotion to her father's comfort had deprived her of all association with the young men of her own age; and though her form was shapely, her eyes bright and sparkling, her hair glossy even in its plain brown braids, her features regular, though with a prematurely aged look, which had driven all colour from her cheeks, yet no word of love had ever been whispered in her ear. Poverty stood as a gaunt sentinel to ward away the votaries of Cupid. But now the chrysalis had burst its shell—she was a worm no longer.

The fresh sea breeze brought colour to the pale cheeks; the hair, loosened from its confining bands, twined into natural ringlets; and the blue-gray eyes sparkled with additional lustre under the influence of ruddy health and bright anticipations of a happy future. All on board noticed the blooming Scotch lassie, but one in particular was much struck by her appearance.

This was the first mate of the ship. He was a handsome young fellow,—with a free and easy sort of manner, which made him a general favourite with the passengers,—apparently some twenty-five years of age. He was about the medium height, slightly built, but evidently possessing great strength and endurance. One of those graceful, wiry frames, susceptible of undergoing almost any amount of hardships. He had curly brown hair, a clear hazel eye, a long, straight nose, and thin lips. You could not discover the shape of the lower part of his face, as a luxuriant dark brown beard covered it from the cheek bones down, commingling with the moustache.

He soon made himself intimate with Catherine, and though she received his advances shily at first, he soon discovered that they were not displeasing to her. Whenever duty afforded the opportunity, he was to be found at her side. He told her that

he was a native of the state of Rhode Island, and that his name was Mark Brander.

This intimacy soon ripened into love, and by the time they reached New York, Catherine had promised to become the wife of Mark Brander. It was a quick wooing, and the consummation was destined to follow as speedily.

Catherine went to her cousin's residence, a small wooden house in Forsyth Street, where she received a warm welcome from Archibald and his American wife, who speedily made her feel at home. Of course she soon apprised them of her intentions, whereat they were greatly surprised.

"I knew you would soon get a husband here," said Archibald; "but I had no idea you would find one on the passage over. You see you could not have brought your good looks to a better market."

Archibald's wife was not so well pleased with the information.

"It is rather sudden," she said; "and you know so little about him."

"Oh! he told me everything," cried Catherine quickly. "He is an orphan like myself, and has no one to consult in regard to anything he chooses to do."

"Men don't always tell the truth," remarked Archibald's wife sagely; "particularly when they are in love."

"Mark is the soul of truth!" exclaimed Catherine indignantly.

It angered her to have her lover's character called into question. But she was obliged to confess, when they came to question her, that she knew but little of the history of her affianced husband, and that was furnished by himself. They did their best to dissuade her from an immediate marriage with Mark Brander, bidding her wait until some inquiries could be made concerning him.

Mark came to the house, and all their doubts and fears vanished before his open countenance and free and genial manner. Catherine had told him of the objections that had been made, and he answered them frankly himself.

"I don't wonder," he said, "that you feel some reluctance to have Catherine wed one who is but a stranger in your eyes. It is but natural. Yet, what can you gain by delay? If you were to know me ten years, you would discover nothing more than I tell you now. My name is Mark Brander, aged twenty-five,—profession, mariner,—accountable to no one on the face of the earth for what I do. We love each other, and believe

we shall be happy in each other's society. In a month's time I shall be obliged to sail upon another long voyage, and it may be a year before I return. If we do not marry now, we shall be obliged to wait all that time. You know the old saying: 'delays are dangerous.' So if Katie is willing, and I am willing, with no one to ask but ourselves, why should we not get married at once, and be happy while we can?"

His careless, off-hand manner, so free from any suspicious circumstance, carried the day, and they withdrew all opposition. So Catherine and Mark were married at the house of Archibald in the presence of himself and wife.

After the ceremony Mark took part of a little house in Allen Street, furnished it nicely, and he and Catherine went to housekeeping. She had no cause to regret her precipitation. Mark was all her fondest imagination had conceived, and made her comfort and happiness his daily study.

One little circumstance, deemed of little importance at the time and speedily forgotten, recurred to her mind in after years with singular force and distinctness.

"Do you know what Mary, Archie's wife, says of you?" she asked Mark one day, in a playful manner.

"No; what?" he returned carelessly, as if the opinion of Archie's wife was a matter of considerable indifference to him.

"She says you may be a Yankee from Rhode Island, but you look a great deal more like a Southerner to her."

"She is a fool!" exclaimed Mark testily.

He was evidently annoyed by the remark, but why, she could not possibly imagine.

"There are some wiseacres in this world, Katie," he said good naturedly, after a slight pause, "who make discoveries that other people never dream of,—who pretend to tell a man's character by a glance at his face, or read what is passing in his mind by the look of his eyes. That is all bosh! Half the people in the world don't know what is passing in their own mind, let alone other people's, and couldn't interpret their thoughts correctly if their lives depended on it. I have been all over the States, and, with a few exceptions, the characteristics of the people are the same. The Georgia planter says, 'I reckon' in the same tone that the Maine farmer says, 'I calculate;' and the 'right smart' of the Vermonter is the identical expression with the Virginian's 'quite peart.'"

Catherine laughed heartily at his droll imitation of the different dialects, though she thought there was no necessity to enter into such an elaborate refutation of her cousin's words

It made little difference to her whether he came from the East or the South.

The day at last came when Mark must sail upon another voyage. It was a bitter parting for Catherine, and the long days of his absence passed heavily away. He returned in six months, to pass another brief respite on shore, and then to sail again.

In this way three years were quickly passed, and Catherine had a sweet pledge of affection to console her during her husband's absence, a boy two years old, whom she had named after his father, Mark.

The time appointed for her husband's return was rapidly approaching, and Catherine looked for him anxiously, for she was again about to become a mother. He had been gone now nearly eight months, but the appointed time passed by, and he did not return. Her second boy was born, and she named him Harry, after her own father.

A year elapsed, and still Mark Brander did not return to his home. Catherine became seriously alarmed. She was ignorant of the name of the ship in which he sailed, or the port to which he was bound. This ignorance arose from the fact that she had always imagined that her husband still held his position on board the emigrant ship; but, upon making inquiries at the office of the company, she was dismayed to hear that her husband had left their employment some three years; nor could the most strenuous inquiries, put forth by herself and her cousin Archibald, obtain the slightest intelligence of Mark Brander. There was no such name in any of the shipping lists.

Three years passed away, of patient watching and hoping against hope, and then the inevitable conclusion forced itself upon Catherine's mind—Mark was dead—drowned at sea—she should never see him again.

She became more calm after this, and turned resolutely to face her widowhood. It was better than the dread uncertainty of suspense. Her children now demanded her care—one was five years old, the other was three. The means left her by her husband had become exhausted, and for some time she had been supporting herself and children by doing washing. But now that her children were growing up, she became anxious to establish them in a better home than her limited means afforded in the great city.

She selected Keyport from the circumstance that she had once made an excursion thither with her husband, and had been much pleased with it. She obtained a little cottage and patch

of ground at a reasonable rent, and transported herself, children, and worldly effects, which were far from numerous, thither.

There, by cultivating her little garden, and washing and sewing for the neighbours, she had succeeded in rearing her children, until they grew old enough to assist her, which greatly lessened her labours. Mark cultivated the garden, and went for fish and oysters in the bay, of which they always had an ample store. Harry, more delicate and studious, mended the lines, rigged the fish-hooks, and weeded the garden, until he went as errand boy into Latimer's store, where he had gradually risen to be head clerk.

For seventeen years had Catherine Brander lived in Keyport, respected by all who knew her. But there were those who shook their heads gravely over her story — they could not believe it. Catherine had been deceived, they said, and then abandoned. It was the old story—poor thing! But she was trying to lead an honest life now—why prevent her? And in all these years no tidings ever came of Mark Brander!

CHAPTER V.

SAMUEL CULLY.

Doris Woodland came to Sea Cliff,—the merriest little romp that ever played havoc with the susceptible heart of man. To Cecilia her coming was a great pleasure, the captain gave her a warm welcome, and she won the heart of the inflexible Philinda the first day. She put new life into the quiet household, and soon became its ruling spirit.

The captain took her and Cecilia in his carriage to show her the surrounding country. They had many pleasant drives, though Doris was not particularly delighted with the scenery. It was too sandy and marshy for her taste. She said the prettiest place in the neighbourhood was Sea Cliff, which highly pleased the captain.

One day, returning from a ride on the road between Keyport and Sea Cliff, Doris, whose eyes were ever on the alert, discovered a peculiar object by the roadside.

"Oh, look at that old loafer," she exclaimed.

They followed the direction of her finger, and there, indeed, was a peculiar object—a man, in an old tattered suit, sitting under a tree by the roadside, smoking a short black pipe. His

face was red and bloated. He had little gray eyes that twinkled amidst ridges of fat. An old straw hat, with a piece of the rim torn away in front, was pulled down over his forehead, from under which straggled a few locks of hair of the colour and consistency of tow. He had a bristly, unwholesome-looking beard of the same colour. This fat, unmeaning face had a general expression of vacuity. Yet, for all his wretchedness, he looked the picture of supreme content as he puffed away at his old clay pipe.

"Sam Cully!" exclaimed the captain.

"And who is Sam Cully, if you please?" inquired Doris.

"When I knew him, years ago, one of the likeliest farmers in the country," answered the captain. "Heavens! what a change."

"I should say so," returned Doris; "and not for the better."

"I must speak to him," said the captain.

"You! father?" cried Cecilia, in surprise. Doris elevated her eyebrows—a way she had when anything was beyond her comprehension.

"Yes, Cecilia," answered the captain. "It is not my way to turn my back upon an old friend in distress. You can drive Doris home, and I will walk. I shall be back in time for tea, tell Philinda."

"Goodness!" cried Doris in alarm; "but won't the horse run away?"

"Oh, no!" returned the captain, smiling at her alarm. "He is very gentle: besides, Cecilia has often driven him before."

"Can you drive?" asked Doris in wondering surprise.

"Oh yes!" answered Cecilia; "and ride on horseback, too."

"I declare you've got to be quite an Amazon!" cried Doris in admiration.

The captain alighted from the carriage, and Cecilia drove away. He approached the smoker, who rolled his eyes up lazily as he drew near.

"Don't you remember me, Sam?" said the captain, seeing that the other betrayed no sign of recognition.

Sam took his pipe from his mouth, wiped the end of the stem with his ragged sleeve, all the while blinking at the captain doubtfully with his bleared eyes.

"That's me," says he. "I'm Sam; but who's you?"

He had a strange voice for so tall a man—he was fully six feet high when he stood up erect—a weak, piping, childish treble, that sounded very odd and ridiculous until you became accustomed to it.

"Then you do not remember me, Samuel Cully?" repeated the captain.

"That's me," cried the outcast. "Samyul Cully, Eskewire; and I'm a plum bird on a lily root!"

What "Samyul" meant by this ambiguous speech is more than I can determine. It was some slang phrase which he had heard, probably, and as it pleased his fancy he had adopted it. The prevailing weakness of his life had been, as we have seen by Philinda's account of him, to ape the follies of others.

"Look at me again, Samuel," persisted the captain, "and see if my features do not remind you of one you once knew."

Samuel took a few whiffs reflectively, whilst he perused the captain's face.

"'Pears to me," he said doubtfully, "as if I had seen you somewhere before. But I aint so young as I used to be: my memory is shaky, and my eyesight bothers me some. If your hair was brown instead of white, I should say you were Nelson Manly."

"I *am* Nelson Manly. Brown hair will change to white in the lapse of years, you know."

"My hair don't change much," chuckled Sam; "but then it always was kind of whitish. So you are Nelson Manly—Cap'an Manly? You are a cap'an now, aint ye?"

"Yes," answered the captain.

"Show! And rich, too, as a Jew—I heerd some one say. Is that so?" asked Sam with considerable interest.

"Tolerably well off—thanks to a kind Providence and a long life of perilous toil."

"Do tell! You're a plum bird on a lily root!" In this conjunction the phrase was intended to be complimentary. "You always was smarter than the rest of us chaps," Sam went on to say, in a meditative mood. "There was you and I and Hobe Carnham—he's a Squire now, I s'pose you know—a purty Squire he makes! You and he and I—I was some punkins in them days—we used to be a great deal together. You was considerably older than us, I remember, twelve or fifteen years—which was it? I know you was a man while we were still boys, and so we used to kind of look up to you. After you went away Hobe and I hitched teams considerably thick, and he showed me some of the tallest kind of life in New York—splendid place to live in, if you've got plenty of money."

The poor inebriate's eyes twinkled at the recollection. He put his pipe back into his mouth, and smoked contemplatively.

"Your experience seems to have cost you dear," remarked the captain with commiseration.

"Who keers?" cried Sam defiantly. "I was bound to see the 'Elephant'—and I did see him; I seen him and felt of his tail!"

"And what have you become from this desire to mix in society and scenes for which nature never intended you?" asked the captain pointedly.

"A plum bird on a lily root!" answered Sam in a maudlin tone.

"Sam," observed the captain, with much feeling; "it grieves me sadly to find you in this state. Only think of all you have thrown away! The energies and best years of life wasted—in pursuit of what? Pleasure, do you call it? A phantom, I say—a will-o'-the-wisp that had led you from the firm path of honest industry and manly worth, to stumble and become mired in the bogs of dissipation, idleness, and squalid misery!"

This solemn appeal from the captain had considerable effect upon Sam. As he had said, in their early associations he had been accustomed to look up to Nelson, as the weak mind always seeks counsel of the stronger. The feeling was not dead within his breast, but began to revive and exert its influence. He let his pipe go out while he listened, knocked out the ashes, and put it carefully away in his waistcoat pocket.

"That's a fact, cap'an," he whined. It seemed as if the tone of his voice was a perpetual cry against the world. "We three are very different now—that's the luck of the thing. You are a cap'an, and as rich as—what's his name?—who was king of some outlandish country in the old time—I used to read about him when I went to school. Hobe is Squire, and justice of the peace, hi! hi! hi!—and I'm—well, I don't amount to a row of pins. But I've seen 'life,' and I've been a plum bird on a lily root!"

Sam always came back to this expression, like the refrain of a song, and it seemed to afford him great satisfaction.

"And what has this 'life,' as you call it, cost you?" asked the captain.

"'Bout all I was ever worth," answered Sam bluntly.

"Do you not think, then, it would have been much better for you if you had checked this desire for a life of excitement, and lived quietly at home, cultivating your farm, which would always have afforded you a comfortable subsistence?"

The captain had a design in thus questioning the poor vagrant. He probed deeply, it is true, but it was necessary to arouse the

better feelings of the man from their long slumber, and half measures would not have succeeded.

"Praps so," whined Sam in answer, something in the manner of a child undergoing a catechism.

"Do you ever reflect," continued the captain in the same strain, "upon all that you have lost? Do you ever consider what you might have been and what you are?"

"I think of it sometimes when I'm sober, and that drives me to drinking again. But 'taint altogether my fault," he continued fiercely, his voice rising shrilly, like the note of a penny trumpet; "that pesky Hobe Carnham has been at the bottom of it all. He 'ticed me away, and learned me how to smoke, and drink, and play billiards, and other fashionable gimcranks. He made a drunken loafer of me, did Hobe Carnham; and I'll just twist his neck for him one of these days: see if I don't!"

The vagrant rose in his excitement, shaking his arms excitedly. You could then see how large he was, and what a splendid specimen of humanity he had degraded and debased. Six feet in height, as I have said, and large in limb, though loosely put together, with a broad chest and brawny arms, giving evidence of great strength,—an athlete in form and bearing, had he taken care of himself; a shambling, lumbering mass of flesh and bone, from self-abuse.

The captain grew pale at Sam's words, and the slumberous blue eye blazed with a sudden fierce light. He seemed strangely agitated at the vagrant's words. But the emotion was as transient as the shade which follows when for a moment a summer's cloud obscures the sun's broad disc.

"Hush, Samuel!" he cried, glancing anxiously around. "Such words are dangerous."

"I don't care," returned Sam moodily; "I shall kill Hobe Carnham one of these days: see if I don't!"

"Tush!" cried the captain impatiently; "you must not speak thus; trouble will come of it. Whatever Hobart Carnham may have done to you, forget, forgive it in a true Christian spirit; or, if you cannot do that, leave him to that Power which will sooner or later call him to a strict account for all his evil doings."

"That's gospel, captain," returned Sam; "and I know it. Good doctrine, too; but I can't live up to it. If anybody wrongs me, over goes his apple-cart! Them's the pacifiers." He extended two brawny fists as he spoke. "And whenever I think what a loafer Hobe Carnham has made of me, the honest Injun becomes excited, and I feel as if I ought to take him by

the throat and choke him! I know it's wrong; but I can't help it."

"Strive against the feeling, Samuel, and you will prevail."

"I don't know why I aint done it afore now," continued Sam. "My life aint worth much; and I'd be satisfied to swing for the satisfaction of knowing that I had done for Hobe Carnham."

"You must not think of it. If the law cannot reach him, leave him to heaven."

"The law!" laughed Sam; he's too smart for the lawyers; and as for heaven, I do believe he's cute enough to cheat the devil, and slip in there after all. But what surprises me most of all, captain, is that you should speak a good word for Hobe Carnham, after the way in which he has used you."

The captain turned a look of utmost astonishment upon Sam.

"Used me?" he repeated. "What do you mean? Did Hobart Carnham ever wrong me?"

"Don't put a strange face on the matter, cap'an," returned Sam; "I know what I know; and you know what I mean well enough, though you pretend not to. I was in New York, let me see—yes, about eighteen years ago. I know what happened there then: a little circumstance, known only to you, and me, and Hobe Carnham."

The captain's smooth brow was furrowed with lines and his eyes gleamed fitfully. His voice trembled with an emotion which he could not suppress as he suddenly interrogated Sam.

"You know all, then?" he cried fiercely. "You were with him when the foul deed was committed—were in his confidence, knew his design, and yet made no effort to save the victim?"

"Nothing of the kind, cap'an," said Sam deprecatingly. "I didn't know nothing at all about the matter until it was all over. I may be a weak fool in some things, but do you think I would have stood by and seen such a thing as that done? No, siree. He told me all about it one night when we got drunk together. I told him you would raise Cain about it, when you found it out, but he snapped his fingers and said he did'nt care. He was always the coolest man I ever knew. Guess you don't care so much now if I do choke him?" added Sam slily.

"More than ever, Sam," responded the captain earnestly. "If I can forgive him, as I freely do, for the great wrong he has done to me, surely you can forgive your lesser evil. Leave him to time and his own conscience; they will deal with him according to his deserts. Now, Sam, I must do something for you. Your life

must no longer be wasted in idleness and debauchery. You are capable of something better."

"Too late!" exclaimed Sam, shaking his head despondingly.

"Not so. It is never too late,—

'While the lamp holds on to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.'

Forego your associations with Hobart Carnham,—I believe with you that he has been the bane of your existence; give up drinking, and become a man again."

"I'd like to do it, by king!" cried the poor fellow, his eyes brightening. "But nobody except Hobe Carnham would give me anything to do if I did turn sober."

"I will, Sam," returned Captain Manly. "Come and work on my farm any day, when you feel like it, and I will pay you good wages."

Sam promised to do so, with tears in his eyes. This unusual kindness had quite overcome him. After a few more earnest words of advice the captain left him, and walked slowly towards his home.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE WAY HOME.

Let us now return to Cecilia and Doris, after the captain alighted, leaving them alone in the carriage.

"How are you off for beaux in this out-of-the-way corner of the earth?" asked Doris. "Any nice fellows in the neighbourhood?"

"Oh yes," answered Cecilia carelessly; "two or three."

"Two or three! Is that all? Rare bumpkins these are, I dare say. Haven't you got a romantic young oysterman, by way of novelty? I've always had a curiosity to see an oysterman, ever since I read that pathetic ballad of the 'Tall Young Oysterman.' This is the way it goes."

Doris commenced singing "The Tall Young Oysterman" with much comic effect, greatly to Cecilia's amazement.

"We have the very person here to suit you," said Cecilia; "an oysterman, or fisherman, it is much the same thing, I fancy."

"Of course; an oyster is a fish, you know. Is he young?"

"Twenty-two."

"Handsome?"

"Very," cried Cecilia earnestly.

"Oh ho, you have been looking at him to some purpose!" exclaimed Doris, with a knowing look.

"Oh, nonsense!" rejoined Cecilia blushing, she knew not why, and vexed with herself for doing so. "He supplies my father with fish, and I see him often; that is all. He is so different from the other fishermen, that he naturally attracted my attention. Besides, there is a singular story connected with him."

"Romantic?"

"Very."

"Let me hear it, then, by all means. I do so doat on anything romantic."

Cecilia briefly recounted the story of Mark's mother, as she had heard it from Philinda Kohog.

"Only to think of our having a romantic young oysterman here!" cried the delighted Doris. "Isn't it nice? Well, who else is there?"

"A young gentleman whom I expect you will set your cap for at once."

"He must be a touch above common humanity for me to do that," returned Doris, tossing her curls disdainfully. "Who is this gentleman?"

"His name is Justin Carnham, and his father lives in that elegant house you admired so much at the corner of our road."

"Tolerably well off, I should imagine, then. Is there any romantic story connected with him?"

"Not that I am aware of," laughed Cecilia. "His history is as commonplace as most people's. His father is in easy circumstances, and Justin has received a fine education, and intends to adopt the profession of civil engineer. He was brought up in New York, is handsome and intelligent—in short, a polished gentleman."

"What! down here in this land of clams and oysters? Why, he must be a greater novelty than the oysterman. Ah! perhaps he is the favoured one?"

"How you talk! There is *no* favoured one. I am heart free, and intend to remain so."

"That is all well enough to say—and women always do say that, until *the* one comes along and lays siege to the citadel, and then they are only to capitulate on honourable terms."

"I tell you I intend him for you; so be careful and be on your best behaviour when he comes."

"Just as if I wasn't always on my best behaviour! I always put it on with my company clothes. Well, I'm much obliged to you, I'm sure, Cecilia. I'll inspect this Justin Carnham, and if I like him, I'll—"

"Take him?"

"Perhaps;—provided—"

"What?"

"That he will take me."

"There can be no doubt of that."

"I am not so sure of it. I can easily understand the attrac tion Sea Cliff has for him. You are the sun, Cecilia, and I am only a lesser planet revolving in your light."

Doris Woodland was no fool. She knew that a poor, portionless girl, even if she did possess equal beauty and accomplishments, stood no chance beside the wealthy heiress. But she did not express this opinion to Cecilia, as she had no desire to wound her friend's sensitive and generous heart. She knew her position, and accepted it gracefully. Envy had no place in her breast, and least of all, envy of Cecilia.

They rode on in silence, absorbed in different trains of thought, until their attention was attracted by a pedestrian approaching. He was a portly gentleman, easy, and at the same time dignified in his carriage. He was dressed in a genteel suit of black, and held a gold-headed cane in his hand. His hair and whiskers were black, curly, and evidenced great care on the part of their possessor. His complexion was quite florid, and he was fleshy in the face, with a double chin. Altogether he had the appearance of one who kept himself in an excellent state of preservation. He looked thirty-five, but he might have been ten years older.

"Who is he?" whispered Doris.

This question was called forth from the circumstance that the gentleman, upon perceiving the girls in the carriage, lifted his hat with great politeness, and intimated a desire to speak with them.

"One of our neighbours,' answered Cecilia as she reined in the horse and stopped the carriage. I have frequently seen him before at church, though we are not intimate. He is Mr. Hobart Carnham, the father of Justin.'

Mr. Hobart Carnham, or, as he was called in those parts, Squire Carnham, approached the carriage, and, laying his hand upon the wheel, gazed into Cecilia's face with an earnest, not to say inquisitive look, which quite bewildered Cecilia, and Doris deemed impertinent.

"I really beg your pardon, young ladies," said Hobart Carnham in a tone of the utmost good-breeding, and which at once proclaimed the gentleman, "for stopping you thus, like a highwayman, in the middle of the road; but be under no apprehensions, I am not going to demand either your money or your lives." His hearty mellow laugh at his own conceit conciliated the girls at once, and they could not refrain from joining in his merriment. "But I was so anxious to exchange a few words with Miss Manly," Hobart continued to say, "that I ventured to transgress the law of etiquette a little, and beg the favour of a few words with you. If I was a young gentleman, you might naturally feel surprised at this request; but as I am an old one" —he laughed again, showing a set of white, regular teeth— "old enough to be your father, there is nothing improper in it."

Cecilia bowed in acquiescence of his position.

"Your father and myself," resumed Hobart, "were quite intimate friends in our young days. Though we became estranged through absence and the lapse of years, and have not resumed our former intimate association, I cherish the same friendly feelings towards him as ever. I was strangely attracted towards you on first beholding you in church, and have felt a strong desire to exchange a few words with you ever since. This is the first opportunity which has presented itself, and I avail myself of it. Will you permit me to ask you a few questions?"

"Certainly," answered the wondering Cecilia.

She was completely bewildered, and appeared to be passing through a dream rather than an actual reality.

"If I offend you, you need not answer," said Hobart blandly, and with a genial smile, calculated to disarm all doubt and prevent offence.

Cecilia bowed again, magnetized by the dark eyes, as it were, that seemed to be gazing into her very soul.

"Pray, my child, how old are you?"

"I shall be eighteen the twelfth of next August," answered Cecilia unhesitatingly.

She saw nothing to be offended at in that question. Had she been ten years older she might not have answered so readily.

"Do you remember your mother?" was the next question.

"No," replied Cecilia. "I have a dim recollection of a sad, pale face bending over me in my childhood, and I have always imagined it to have been that of my mother; but my earliest distinct recollections are of my home at Maroneck, with Mrs. Woodland, and of my little playmate, Doris. This is she—Mr. Carnham, Miss Doris Woodland."

Squire Carnham lifted his hat politely in acknowledgment of the introduction. He had a youthful, gallant way in everything he did, which was in perfect keeping with his appearance.

"Did ever anybody tell you you were like your mother?" he asked, resuming his questions.

"No one has ever spoken to me about my mother," rejoined Cecilia sadly.

"Not even your father?"

"Her name never passes his lips."

"Did that ever strike you as being strange?"

"Not at all. I know he must have loved her very dearly, and he did not wish to recall bitter memories by speaking of her."

This reply seemed to have a peculiar effect on Hobart Carnham, for his brow grew perplexed, and he mused deeply for a moment; though, at the same time, it appeared to afford him light upon a vexed question in his own mind, for he muttered,—

"Very likely, very likely—a not improbable circumstance; and my surmises may be incorrect after all. But the resemblance! can that be chance—the family characteristics running in the blood? If so, it is wonderful!"

All this came to Cecilia's ears very indistinctly, and was entirely beyond her comprehension.

"Do you know how long your mother has been dead?" asked Squire Carnham suddenly, coming out of his fit of abstraction.

"Fifteen years, I have been told."

Again that perplexed look settled upon Hobart Carnham's face.

"The very time," he murmured. It would be strange if she should be hers, after all. "Did you ever hear of your aunt Cecilia?" he added aloud.

"I have been told that my father had a sister, much younger than himself, of that name, and that I was called after her."

"Did you ever see her?"

"Oh no; she died before I was born."

"She must have died quite young."

"I do not know; but I imagine so, as she has been dead nearly twenty years."

"Are you sure it is so much as that?"

"Oh yes; I heard my father tell a neighbour so who was inquiring about her."

Squire Carnham smiled—a strange, peculiar, satisfied smile—at this information.

"Did ever anybody tell you you were very like your aunt Cecilia?"

"It is the remark of all who remember her at my age, the moment they behold me. But there is nothing so wonderful in that,—resemblances run in families, you know."

This simple observation appeared to renew Squire Carnham's perplexity. He revolved the matter again in his own mind. His face cleared, and he seemed to have solved the problem.

"Pray, tell me what was your mother's maiden name?" he asked quickly.

"I do not know—I never heard it."

"That's strange. Do not her relatives visit you?"

"No; I do not think my mother had any living,—at least, I have never seen any."

"Thank you, young lady," said Squire Carnham, as he lifted his hat for the third time, "for the kindness with which you have gratified an old man's somewhat impertinent curiosity. I have the pleasure to wish you a very good day."

He bowed with courtly ease, replaced his hat, and walked slowly down the road. Cecilia drove on again.

"A remarkably nice gentleman," said Doris; "and if his son is as good-looking, I think he will pass muster. But what a string of questions he asked you! And who was this aunt Cecilia that he was so anxious about?"

"I do not know,—only this: my father had a sister of that name, sixteen years younger than himself, whom he regarded as much in the light of a daughter as a sister. There seems to have been something strange in her history and early death; but what it is I have never been able to ascertain. My father has a strange repugnance to being questioned concerning her, and it seems to cost him an effort even to breathe her name."

"I see how it is!" cried Doris; "that is the *skeleton of your household;* you know they say there is one in every family!"

"Then I mean to find out what the skeleton is."

"How will you do that?"

"Philinda Kohog must have heard the story in her young days: I'll make her tell me."

"Do so, by all means; I do so like to unravel a mystery—it's just as entertaining as solving enigmas."

During the balance of their ride home Doris launched upon the sea of her vivid imagination, did nothing but indulge in the most extravagant surmises in regard to the probable and improbable history of Cecilia's aunt, the dead sister of Captain Nelson Manly.

After leaving the girls, Squire Carnham walked slowly on, immersed in a fit of the deepest cogitation. His busy thoughts ran something in this wise:—

"Glad I met her; been waiting for an opportunity to satisfy my doubts this long time; are they satisfied?—dubious. The very age, and her perfect picture in form and feature—a reproduction of the first Cecilia. Did she ever have a child? I never heard of it; yet the girl's age and the time of her mother's death, they coincide. The captain has falsified the date of his sister's death; she has not been dead twenty years—nothing like it. By the Lord! I would like to have a talk with the old sea-dog, and learn the truth. He knows all: I can tell that by his actions,—the quiet way in which he ignores our former friendship. I feel an uncomfortable sensation always in his presence. I thought he would have said something to me before now. Talk of the fiend, they say, and straightway he appears,—here comes Captain Manly."

True enough, returning from the interview with Samuel Cully, with head erect and firm elastic tread, came the captain. His frame quivered, the blue eye blazed; for one moment he paused as he beheld Squire Carnham as if about to speak to him; but he conquered the emotion, whatever it was, and passed by him as if he had been an utter stranger.

"The cut direct," muttered Squire Carnham, as he turned to look after him, swinging his gold-headed cane nonchalantly in his hand. "Well, it is no more than I ought to expect. I am lucky to get off so cheap."

With this consolatory reflection he pursued his walk, coming soon upon Sam Cully, sitting under the tree where Nelson Manly had left him, trying to re-light his pipe. The "plum bird on a lily root" looked at the Squire askance.

"Hullo, Hobe!" he cried; "where bound?"

"To Keyport," answered the Squire, in no way resenting the vagabond's familiarity; "I am going to Goodtipple's to have a 'smile.' Come along?"

"No, sir-r-r," answered Sam with a ludicrous attempt at dignity. "I've gin it up. I'm reformed now. I aint a plum bird on a lily root any longer."

"Reformed?" laughed the surprised Squire; "since when?"

"I've just come to that pint."

"Oh ho!" cried the Squire with sudden light; "I see how it is. Captain Manly has been talking with you?"

"That's so. I'm going to quit drinking, and go to work on his farm."

"A good idea. I've tried to get you to work on my farm often enough, and without obliging you to quit drinking either,—that is, not to drink in work hours. I'm glad to hear you have reformed, however; stick to it, it is the best thing for you; you know I have always said so. However, if you think better of it, and feel thirsty, you will find me at Goodtipple's."

The Squire walked on, twirling his gold-headed cane, while Sam looked after him with a ferocious scowl.

"There he goes!" he whined; "tantalizing a fellow this awful hot weather, which makes a man so dreadful dry. I oughter get right up and choke him, and I shall, some dark night—I know I shall—and pitch his carcase into Middletown Point Creek. But I won't drink with him. No! I'll pizen myself first!"

Alas for poor, weak Sam's resolution! In half an hour's time he was at Goodtipple's hob-nobbing with the Squire, where he was laid under the table in the private room; while the Squire walked home, smiling and bowing blandly to all his acquaintances. He always preferred to walk, though he had his horse and carriage: the exercise, he said, was good for him.

When Sam got sober again, he was on the stool of repentance for his relapse, and threatened to be the death of Squire Carnham the next time he met him. Goodtipple, who was a bit of a wag, said, "He guessed that Sam, instead of slaying the Squire, would get slewed himself!" And so the event proved. Sam was drinking with the Squire the very next day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAIL UPON THE BAY.

The day on which it had been arranged to have a sail in Mark Brander's boat broke with unclouded splendour — as lovely a one as could have been desired. The sun shone with undazzled lustre; the air was balmy; and a fresh breeze from the sea ruffled the water into tiny wavelets.

Mark brought his boat up to the dock to receive his passengers, who consisted of Cecilia Manly, Doris Woodland, and Justin Carnham. They were soon on board: the sail was hoisted, and the gallant little craft sped seaward as if proud of her freight.

Doris seated herself beside Mark at the helm, and plied him

with innumerable questions about every object that attracted her attention. Cecilia and Justin were seated forward, he showing a strong disposition to monopolise her society, which Doris observing, maliciously insisted upon making the conversation general. If the truth must be told, she was rather piqued at the scanty attention she had received from such a good-looking fellow as Justin Carnham.

"Isn't this delightful?" she cried to Cecilia.

Then she commenced singing—

"We are out on the ocean sailing."

Mark was much amused by her lively spirits and chatty talk. Indeed, few could resist the charm of Doris's conversation—it was so free, natural, and unconventional. He felt at ease in her society at once, which was not the case with Cecilia. With her he was ever shy and diffident.

"I do not wonder you love the sea," said Doris to Mark. "There is a strange delight in gliding over the waves, and an exhilaration in the pure breeze which makes the heart beat with a new and thrilling emotion."

"There are other emotions upon the ocean," answered Mark, "which are not so pleasant. It is a treacherous element, never to be trusted. The sky is fair now, the wind light, and the ocean gently heaving, but a sudden change might come that would transform all this loveliness into fury. Let the clouds gather, the wind strengthen into a gale, and these gently undulating waves turn to white-capped billows; our little bark would be tossed about like a feather, and you would heartily wish yourself on land again."

"I hope a storm will not come," cried Doris with apprehension. "Do you think there is any danger of one?"

"I think not. It is not the season of the year for storms. But it is hard to say when a storm will come. The wind plays sad havoc in this bay sometimes, and comes with very little warning."

"There's no pleasure without its drawback, you see, Miss Woodland," exclaimed Justin. "You need not alarm yourself, though; this is a staunch boat, and Mark is a capital skipper."

"But we might upset."

"Not much danger of that," rejoined Mark. "The mast might be carried away, if it blew hard enough, but it would be difficult to upset us. Should a storm come, there is safe anchorage on our lee; blow from whatever quarter it may, I can make a harbour. Besides, the Cecilia only draws eighteen

inches of water, and I could run her on the beach, so you could wade ashore."

"Yes; but our feet would get wet," cried Doris, with a grimace.

"Oh no!" returned Justin; "we would carry you ashore in our arms."

"How romantic that would be!" exclaimed Doris, clapping her hands. "I don't care if a storm does come. Do you, Cecilia?"

"Really, I think the romance would hardly compensate me for the storm," answered Cecilia, with a smile.

"The ocean is like life," said Justin reflectively—"uncertain, full of changes. Many a man has been wrecked who commenced his voyage of life with smiling prospects. Look at the present state of the country—happy, prosperous; and yet scheming and unprincipled men are striving to convert this calm into a storm. Who would dream that we are on the eve of a great convulsion? Yet another year may find this now peaceful country the scene of desperate warfare."

"Do you think so, sir?" asked Mark eagerly.

"I do indeed. The South has been labouring for thirty years to bring about a disruption of the Union, and will seize upon the first pretext to accomplish its ends. That pretext will be the election of Abraham Lincoln."

Mark did not answer. He had little taste for politics; besides, an idea was busy in his mind. Lately, a strange desire to change his condition had taken possession of his mind: that desire was to raise himself to a position in which he might aspire to the hand and heart of Cecilia Manly. Civil life presented few opportunities, but a war would open the doors to fame, honour, and emolument to a brave heart and a daring arm. His eye kindled and his chest heaved at the thought of what he might achieve in his country's service.

Doris, whose keen eye was ever on the alert, observed and guessed in part the feelings which filled his bosom.

"You would like a war, so that you could turn soldier?" she asked.

Mark coloured: it discomposed him to have his thoughts guessed so readily. He did not know what expressive features he possessed.

"Not so," he answered modestly. "I would not be so heartless as to wish a war for my own personal advancement. Heaven forbid that this peaceful land should be converted into a scene of slaughter—its smiling fields desolated, its comfortable home-

steads changed into blackened ruins; but should ruthless traitors attempt the destruction of the land, I should not remain idle at home, but offer my poor services to the country that gave me birth!"

"Well said, Mark!" cried Justin.

A sentiment which Doris echoed in a very spirited and pointed manner. As for Cecilia, her eyes had rested upon Mark's features while he spoke—entranced, as it were, by the spirit which shone through them—with a look more eloquent than the words he had uttered.

"That man has a soul," she thought—"a nature beyond the narrow limits in which he has been compelled to pass his life. Under different circumstances, with the aid of position and wealth, those potent agents, would he not have made his mark in the world?"

She lost herself in a train of reflections which this thought gave rise to. Justin observed her pre-occupation.

"A truce to politics and war—they are dull subjects for ladies' ears," he said. "Miss Manly must excuse us for boring her with such an uninteresting subject."

"No excuse is necessary," returned Cecilia; "I was not bored, I assure you. I was only thinking that there are two sides to the picture. The young aspirant for military glory thinks only of the 'pomp and circumstance of glorious war;' he does not reflect upon the aching hearts he leaves behind, the uncertain changes which may give him an early grave instead of that glory he so much desires."

"Better an early grave seeking to be *somebody* than to live in safe obscurity a *nobody*," returned Mark.

His eyes met Cecilia's as he spoke, and there was something in the glance that heightened the colour in her cheek and made her turn away her head.

"See how far we are from the land," she said, changing the conversation. "Had we not better return?"

"By all means," answered Justin. "We will put into Keyport and have some ice-cream. Wear ship, Captain Mark."

"Can you get ice-cream in Keyport?" asked Doris, opening her eyes widely.

"Oh yes; not quite as good as at Taylor's in New York, but still quite palatable, I assure you."

"Gracious me, isn't that nice! I thought they had nothing but oysters and clams there."

This remark caused a general laugh. The boat went "about," the ladies ducking their heads gracefully to avoid the boom, and the "Cecilia" headed gallantly for Keyport.

Arrived there, Mark wished to remain and take care of the boat, while Justin escorted the ladies into the village, but they would not hear of any such arrangement,—insisting on his bearing them company.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Doris, with a pout; "what would I do for a beau? One isn't enough for both of us."

"I am not exactly in holiday attire," expostulated Mark.

"Who cares for your attire," cried Doris; "I don't. Are you afraid of anybody here?"

"Not much," laughed Mark.

"Perhaps you think your sweetheart might see us and be jealous?"

"I have no sweetheart," answered Mark gravely.

"More's the pity—then come along."

Justin was pleased with this arrangement, as it took Doris off his hands, leaving him free to devote himself entirely to Cecilia. So Mark fastened his boat to the pier, and they walked up into the village together.

On their return, and after having placed the ladies in the boat, Mark discovered that the rope of a dingy-looking craft, called the "Sarah Jane," had been fastened over his, and that the boat lay in such a way as to prevent the "Cecilia" from putting off. He was about to unfasten this rope, when a heavy hand was laid upon his arm, and a rough voice, in tones decidedly the reverse of pleasant, called out—

"Stop that!"

Mark looked up, and beheld a brawny, squat, red-faced and red-haired Irishman, called "Clam Dennis," who was well known in those parts for his quarrelsome disposition, and his constant infringement upon the rights and property of others.

"I merely wish to unfasten your rope, so I can release my own boat," returned Mark pleasantly.

"Let me rope alone," growled Dennis.

"But don't you see, man, that I can't get my boat out while yours is in the way."

"Fhat do I care? Sure I've got as much right to lay at the dock as yees have; so just wait until I get ready to move, and then you can go."

Mark saw by the grin that accompanied these words that Dennis had purposely fastened his boat in such a way as to prevent him from leaving the dock. His eye kindled, and an indignant feeling began to swell in his bosom.

"I tell you what it is," he sharply exclaimed, "if you don't remove that rope, I'll remove it for you."

"By me sowl!" grinned Dennis, "but I'd like to see you do that same!"

By this time the altercation had reached those in the boat: the ladies became alarmed, and Justin demanded the cause of dispute. Mark's cheek burned with shame and indignation at becoming involved in such a petty squabble in the presence of ladies. Had he been alone, he would have made short work of Clam Dennis. He briefly explained the cause of difficulty.

Justin had been reared in a different sphere from Mark, and could not tolerate even for a moment the insolence of an inferior.

"I will soon settle this affair!" he cried.

He sprang up the steps, and hurried to the post where Mark and Dennis stood by the rope.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Doris; "I do hope they won't get into a fight."

Cecilia's cheek paled, but she said nothing. Her eyes were rivetted upon Mark on the pier.

"Do you intend to unfasten that rope?" demanded Justin of Dennis.

"Indade, thin, but I do *not*," returned he insolently.

"Then I'll unfasten it for you," cried Justin hotly.

An axe lay upon the pier, where some one had been splitting wood for the steamer. Justin seized it, and with one blow severed the rope.

"There!" he said, as he cast away the axe; "that 's the way you'll get served every time you fasten your rope over mine."

"An' I'll show yees how I'll serve yees," howled Dennis, making a dive for the axe.

There was no mistaking his murderous intention. Before he could grasp the axe Mark was upon him, grasped him round the waist, and with a strength which seemed marvellous in one of his light frame, swung him up bodily from the ground, and hurled him over the edge of the pier into deep water.

"Get into the boat, Mr. Carnham," said Mark, as coolly as if nothing had happened, "and I will cast her off."

Dennis arose spluttering and blowing in the water like a huge dog.

"Oh!" exclaimed Doris, "the man will be drowned."

"Oh no, he won't," answered Mark, leaping into the boat and pushing her off; "he can swim."

"Let him drown and be—blessed!" muttered Justin wrathfully. "It is all he is fit for."

"Oh!" cried Cecilia, reproachfully, "how can you think so?

The ducking is a just punishment for his insolence, but that is enough. I hope he will profit by it."

"Such as he never profit by anything," returned Justin.

The "Cecilia" moved out into the bay with her bow pointed towards Sea Cliff, passing the "Sarah Jane," which, being released from her mooring, drifted slowly with the tide towards the entrance of Middletown Point Creek, whilst her unhappy owner clambered up the steps and shook the water from his shock of red hair, like a Newfoundland dog.

"Wait a while!" he cried savagely, shaking his fist after the "Cecilia," "wait a while, Mark Brander, and you, too, Mister Justin Carnham, maybe I'll pay yees for this one of these days."

Justin laughed scornfully. He heeded Dennis's words about as much as he would the barking of a savage dog.

The ladies were in some perturbation at the threat, and expressed a fear that trouble might be apprehended in the future. Mark reassured them.

"Threatened men live long," he said, "the dogs that bark the loudest do not always bite. He will never fasten his rope over mine again. It is the first time he has ever troubled me, and I dare wager it will be the last. Brute force is the only way to deal with brutes."

Dennis was dismissed in those words for other and more pleasant topics. The day, however, was not destined to end without another adventure.

On reaching the dock at Sea Cliff, Justin attempted to leap upon the steps with Doris in his arms, by way of an illustration of how he could save her in case of shipwreck, missed his footing, and down they both went in ten feet of water. A scream from Doris was the first intimation that Mark and Cecilia had of the disaster.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Cecilia, "they will both be drowned!"

Mark sprang to the side and grasped Doris, who, thanks to her crinoline, floated as gracefully upon the surface of the water as a swan; but Justin was nowhere to be seen. He drew her into the boat, and the moment he did so Justin rose sputtering to the surface. He had been concealed by Doris's ample skirts. Mark gave him a hand and soon landed him in the boat.

When all was over, Justin laughed at it as a good joke, but Doris fainted dead away, for the first time in her life. The fright had been too much for the lively gipsy. Mark carried her in his arms upon the pier, when she recovered sufficiently to walk to the house. She was dreadfully annoyed at her want

of nerve, particularly as Justin had assured her that there had been no danger.

"Gracious me!" she exclaimed, "I never expected to set foot on dry land again. What a little fool I was to get so frightened, and faint away, too! I shall blush for myself as long as I live."

"You need not," answered Mark, "for I can assure you there was real danger. The water was certainly deep enough to drown you, if you had remained long enough in it."

"Which I had no intention of doing, I can assure you," laughed Justin. "However, let us not discuss the subject any further, but get rid of our wet clothes as quickly as possible. 'All 's well that ends well;' and here is an end of our sailing party."

With these words they separated, each to their home, Justin declining an invitation to enter the house and exchange his wet garments. They would dry on him as he walked home, he said.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FLAT REFUSAL.

THAT evening, in the seclusion of their chamber, Cecilia and Doris discussed the merits of the young men.

"Tell me which you prefer?" said Doris: "I have made up my mind to have one of them, and I don't wish to interfere with you."

"You are very considerate," laughed Cecilia. "Then, I suppose, you are not particular which one you take."

"Not very," was the nonchalant answer. "They are both good-looking fellows. Justin is the best off, but that doesn't matter; true love, you know, is never mercenary. In fact, Justin has the advantage altogether, as he is so much better-looking than Mark."

"Oh! do you think so?" cried Cecilia quickly.

"Yes; don't you?"

"By no means. I think Mark has more real manly beauty than Justin."

"What do you call real manly beauty?"

"Beauty of form as well as feature. An eye that speaks a soul."

"And hasn't Justin got an eye and a soul, too?"

"True; but it appears to me that Mark has more real worth,

stability of character, than Justin. He is not so polished, I grant you; but then he has not had the same advantages. Reverse their positions, and I think Mark would bear away the palm."

"How closely you have observed him. I begin to think you are interested in this 'tall young oyster man.'"

"Nonsense! How could I help noticing him, thrown together so much as we have been?"

"Ah! I see how it is—a romantic attachment, lover in humble circumstances, stern father, elopement, love in a cottage, pure affection, and plenty of oysters!"

"Not so bad as that. I begin to entertain a friendship for this young man, I confess, and feel an interest in his peculiar history, and his praiseworthy efforts to support his mother and earn a position in the world."

"Which will one day cause you to fall in love with him," pursued the incorrigible Doris. "'Friendship is akin to love,' you know."

"Be that as it may; and it were no shame to any girl to bestow her affection upon a true man, whatever his position in life might be. I shall never descend to folly: when I wed, it will be with my father's consent and blessing."

"Supposing his consent could not be obtained?"

"Then I would sacrifice my love to duty."

"You are a model daughter, Cecilia. There are not many like you."

"Because I have a model father. The parent who performs his duty to his child is always sure of her obedience. My father is an old man. He has often told me that I was the prop of his life—a tender flower he gathered in his mature years, after a life of many toils and sorrows. The great sorrow of his life was my aunt Cecilia, as I surmise from the vague stories I have heard—she whom I so strangely resemble. I would lay down my life sooner than cause him an additional sorrow; for I know that any misconduct of mine would for ever destroy his peace."

"Cecilia, you are a good and noble girl! In fact, you are a perfect paragon of your sex, and always have been from a child. You deserve a good husband; and I hope you'll get one. That's the sum total of a woman's existence; so I can't wish you anything better."

"I shall have sufficient time to obtain that desired object, I think. I am not eighteen yet: it is scarcely time to be thinking of a husband."

"Gracious me! why, I am no older than you are, and for the

last six years I have thought of nothing else. I have been engaged three times already."

"Engaged three times! and all broken off?

"Every one. I changed my mind before it came to anything serious."

"Doris, I believe you are a bit of a flirt."

"Bless your primitive soul! so is every woman, except your simple innocent self; it comes natural to us."

"Do you not think it is wrong?"

"Not a bit of it. If you went shopping, wouldn't you make the salesman show you all his best goods, and, after examining their pattern and quality, if you did not find anything that suited your fancy, wouldn't you leave without making a purchase?"

"Certainly."

"That is my case in regard to a husband. I flirt with each applicant in order to get an idea of his quality and merits; and if he don't suit, after a limited probation, I give him leave to withdraw."

"Supposing one of these lovers should become seriously attached to you, such conduct might inflict much suffering upon him."

"Not much danger of that. Man is a selfish animal, and takes such things very lightly. Besides, flirting is not confined to our sex; the men are just as bad as we are. You know what the Bard of Avon says:—'Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for love.' Shakespeare knew what the world was made of; and his world was the same world we have to-day, neither better nor worse, as far as humanity is concerned."

"You may reconcile it to your conscience, Doris, but I never could to mine."

"My dear, we are not all constituted alike, which is a wise precaution of the great Creator. If everybody was of the same way of thinking, there would be no living in the world. But let us leave this abstruse field of speculation, descend from our hobby-horses, and come back to the starting-point. In regard to Mark, now, supposing you should fall in love with him—don't shake your head in that positive manner, it is not such an improbability—and feel that your happiness rested in his hands, that you truly loved him with all the strength of that dear little heart, which will be such a perfect mine of love to the fortunate possessor, and your father would not consent to your union, what would you do?"

Doris put this question triumphantly: she felt sure that she had advanced a position that would render Cecilia's untenable.

"My course would be simple," answered Cecilia unhesitatingly. "Did I love Mark, as you say, I should go to my father and tell him so, and ask his sanction for my love."

"And if he refused?"

"He would not refuse."

"Not refuse?" cried Doris in astonishment. "Do you think that Captain Manly, the rich, retired mariner, would consent to his daughter's marriage with a poor fisherman?"

"I do," returned Cecilia with confidence. "I know my father's heart and disposition. Worldly advantages cannot sway him; wealth is no object in his eyes beyond a means of doing good. He would remember that he was once poor and humble himself; and if he felt satisfied of Mark's worth and my affection, he would give us both his blessing and consent, and say, 'Be happy!'"

"He's a perfect old trump!" exclaimed Doris with enthusiasm. So just you fall in love with Mark, for he's over head and ears in love with you."

"Do you think so?" asked Cecilia, by no means displeased.

"Do I think so? Don't I know so? Just consider the experience I have had in love affairs. I know the symptoms at the first glance. He loves you—away off—you are a kind of idol; an angel as it were (that's what the men always call us, my dear, when they are very far gone); and he worships you from a distance reverentially. He thinks it is an awful presumption upon his part—and I dare say a great many other people would think so, if they only knew it—and he will never breathe a syllable of his love unless you give him the least, little, wee bit of encouragement. You will do that fast enough, now that I have given you the hint, without any premeditation upon your part. I am so glad you don't care for Justin!"

"Why so?"

"Because I want him myself. He is just my style—dashy and impulsive, and wears such good clothes. Plague take him! he's in love with you too!"

"What, Justin?"

"Yes, Justin. That's always the way with the men: a dozen of them will run after one woman, when they know there is only one chance, and leave eleven others neglected, though they may be just as desirable as the favoured one. However, it won't break his heart to be refused by you; and I don't mind taking him second-hand, for I am determined to have him."

"What! whether he will or no?" laughed Cecilia.

"Oh, he will, fast enough. I'll bring him to the point. Bless you! half the men don't know what is good for them. I know the kind of wife he wants better than he does himself What would the men be without us, poor helpless creatures. we set them going and keep them in trim. These lords of creation may be kings, but women are the prime ministers!"

After this sage observation the girls sought their couch—to dream, possibly, of their intendeds; for it seems to be a woman's religion to think she was intended for some one.

A few days after the sailing party, Justin Carnham waited upon Captain Manly, and desired a private interview. The old man received him in a little room in the south-east corner of the house, which he had fitted up as a snuggery.

It was a cozy little retreat, the windows commanding a view of the ocean. Here the captain kept his books and papers, his fishing tackle, and his pipes and tobacco. One side was fitted up with shelves with glass doors, that held his books and many curious articles that he had collected in foreign lands. The walls were covered with maps and marine views; a portrait of the captain, done in oil; and photographs of the vessels he had commanded. Here Cecilia loved to come of a summer's evening, when the old mariner sat by the open window, the amber-mouthed pipe between his lips, and the cool sea breeze fluttering his long locks of snow, sit on a little stool at his feet, rest her elbows upon his knees, and listen to those wild tales of perilous adventure that voyagers love to tell.

Captain Manly did not receive Justin Carnham in a very cordial manner. He was polite, frigidly so, and that was all. Though he knew of the young man's visits to his house, he had studiously avoided him. Justin was not aware of this aversion. He thought the captain reserved, but deemed it his usual manner. Naturally impulsive, Justin had no hesitation in proceeding at once to the object of his visit.

"Captain Manly," he said, "I have waited upon you for the purpose of soliciting your permission to pay my addresses to your daughter."

The pipe dropped out of the captain's mouth upon the floor, and he looked upon Justin with such a glance of horror and dismay, and turned so ghastly white in the face, that the young man thought a mortal illness had seized him, and was about to rush from the chamber to call for assistance.

"Stay!" gasped the captain hoarsely. "Reach me that little flask from the table: it contains a cordial."

Justin did so mechanically. The captain placed it to his lips and swallowed a few drops.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, drawing a long breath, and placing the cordial flask on the window-sill beside him, as if he feared another attack. "It is gone now. Do not be alarmed, Mr. Carnham, it was but a spasm—a touch of an old complaint to which I am subject, brought on by exposure in my youth. You did me the honour," he continued with great deliberation, "to ask my permission to address my daughter as a lover?"

"I did."

"I regret, Mr. Carnham, that I cannot grant that request."

Justin was perfectly astounded at this plain refusal.

"Sir," he said, "do I understand you aright? I need not acquaint you with my family and position in the world; you are sufficiently familiar with them; nor do I think you can advance anything against either. Let me beg of you, then, to reconsider your decision. I believe I am not indifferent to Cecilia, and, with your permission, I think I could win her affections and make her my wife."

"Mr. Carnham, a refusal is always a painful thing; but in this case there is no alternative. Under no circumstances can Cecilia ever become your wife."

"At least," cried Justin, both mortified and offended, though he strove to conceal his emotion, "in justice to myself, you will let me know the grounds of this refusal."

"Be satisfied, young man," returned the captain sternly, "that they are solid and substantial ones—though I cannot enter into details. Again, I repeat, Cecilia can never become your wife. If you value your future peace and happiness, banish all thought of it; cease your intercourse with Cecilia, go far away from her, and let absence, that sovereign cure for love, teach you to forget her. I give you this counsel for your own good. And now I must request you, and believe me it causes me much pain to do so, to put an end to your visits hither. Cecilia and you must meet no more."

Too angry to trust himself with a reply, Justin bowed stiffly and left the house. When he reached the open air his feelings found vent.

"If she loves me," he exclaimed, "I'll have her, in spite of the old sea dog!"

The captain had recourse to his cordial the moment Justin left him. This simple interview seemed to have affected him strangely. He heard Cecilia singing as she descended from her chamber, and he called to her.

"Here, father," she said, coming into the room. "Do you want me?"

He drew her upon his knee as if she had been a girl of ten instead of seventeen, and gazed earnestly into her honest blue eyes.

"Tell me, my child," he cried in trembling accents, "do you love Justin Carnham?"

"Oh yes," she answered; "I love him as—"

"You do?"

"As a brother."

"A brother?"

The captain grew white again.

"Yes, as a brother; that is, I like him; his company is agreeable; but I do not love him."

"You do not love him as the woman loves the man she marries?"

"By no means."

"You have no desire to become his wife: you would not, if he should ask you?"

"No; I would wed no man without your consent."

"Thank God! thank God! that affliction, at least, is spared me!"

He pressed her to his heart, while tears streamed down his aged cheeks.

CHAPTER IX.

TIME FLIES.

As the reader is aware, Cecilia Manly did not entertain any stronger feeling than friendship for Justin Carnham; but, deceived by her amiability and courtesy, he seized upon the first favourable opportunity to declare his passion.

It was in the grove upon the cliff, their favourite loitering place, that he made the avowal. To his chagrin and surprise, he was told that there was no hope for him,—mildly, gently, it is true, but the refusal was decisive.

"As a friend, I shall always be pleased to see you," said Cecilia, in conclusion; "but as a lover, never. Banish such a thought from your mind, as it will only cause constraint between us."

In vain Justin appealed to her with all the eloquence of youthful passion. He saw that it grieved her gentle nature to

give him pain; but he could not shake her determination. She soon made her excuses, and hurried into the house, gladly escaping from an embarrassing interview. Justin Carnham could plainly perceive that Cecilia Manly was not for him, and his reflections were by no means pleasant ones. In this frame of mind Doris Woodland, who had been gathering blueberries in the adjoining shrubbery, found him.

She had seen Cecilia leave him, and easily guessed, from the expression of his face, what had taken place. She came and seated herself beside him on the little rustic bench erected against the trunk of a lordly oak. Immersed in thought, Justin did not perceive her.

"What is the matter with mother's darling?" said Doris in precisely the same tone as if she had been addressing a spoiled child. "He don't look pleased."

"He isn't," answered Justin gruffly, annoyed at the glance of her roguish black eye.

"Don't bite! that's a good fellow!"—patting him on the back as if he had been a large dog; "but tell its mamma what ails it?"

Justin laughed outright: her playfulness had restored him to good humour.

"The fact of the matter is, Doris," he answered frankly, "I believe I have made a fool of myself."

"Not an uncommon occurrence at your time of life," replied Doris demurely; "so you need not let that trouble you. I know what ails you."

"You do?"

"Oh yes! you have been making a proposal to Cecilia."

"You are good at guessing."

"It's no guess at all. I have got eyes."

"Yes; and very pretty ones they are, too."

"That's a matter of opinion. You have proposed to Cecilia, and been rejected."

"You're a witch!" exclaimed Justin, endeavouring to hide his mortification under a tone of banter.

"Not a bit of it. Witchcraft was not necessary to discover that you were desperately in love, and only waited for an opportunity to sacrifice yourself at the shrine of Hymen, just as the poor Asiatics throw themselves beneath the wheels of the car of Juggernaut. You have proposed, and, figuratively speaking, the wheels have gone over you."

"With a vengeance!"

"Here's where you have the advantage of the poor heathen:

they sacrifice life, you but love—a boyish fancy at the best. No man knows his own mind until he is well on to thirty; I hope you are cured?"

"I don't know," answered Justin doubtfully. "I was pretty far gone. Do you think Cecilia knows her own mind?"

"Undoubtedly. She is as clear-headed as the old captain himself."

"He's a funny old man!"

"In what way?"

Justin related the interview between the captain and himself.

"Now, what on earth," he asked, "can you imagine has caused his dislike to me?"

"I cannot," responded Doris thoughtfully; "there are a great many things here that puzzle me. Of one thing I am convinced—that there is a skeleton in the household."

"A skeleton?"

"You know, figuratively speaking, some secret of disgrace or crime which the captain keeps carefully concealed, and in which perhaps you may be implicated."

"How can that be? This is the first time that I have ever encountered Captain Manly; and, from what Philinda Kohog has told me, it appears that he was ignorant of my existence until he came to Sea Cliff."

"Perhaps your father, then?"

"Impossible! They were always the best of friends in their young days; and I have often heard my father regret that the captain's seclusion and strange unsociability, since his return, had prevented a renewal of their former pleasant intercourse."

"Have you ever thought what this seclusion and unsociability may arise from?"

"The cares and infirmities of age."

"Nonsense! the captain is as hale and as hearty as either I or you—a wonderfully preserved specimen of old age. There lies the secret—in that seclusion and unsociability; and I am determined to find it out. I shall have plenty of time, as both the captain and Cecilia insist upon my taking up my permanent residence here."

"If you do, I hope you will take me into your confidence," laughed Justin, who had little faith in this secret. "For my part, I shall return to New York and commence my profession. Perhaps Cecilia may miss me when I am gone, and that may awaken a more tender feeling towards me in her breast."

"Don't you count on any such feeling. Her breast is already sufficiently occupied by another."

"Another!" cried Justin, springing to his feet. "Cecilia in love with another?"

"Just as sure as you are standing there."

"Who is he? What's his name?"

"Pardon me; that is something I could not reveal, even if I was positive of the fact, as we women never betray each other's confidence."

"That accounts for my poor success. Some one she knew before she came hither?"

"Very likely."

"Doris, I am cured: that last dose did it."

"I am glad to hear it, for really you hadn't the slightest chance."

Justin twisted the ends of his moustache in an absent manner.

"Doris, I shall return to New York to-morrow. I should like to hear occasionally from Sea Cliff. Might I venture to ask you to correspond with me?"

Doris's eyes sparkled.

"Why," she hesitated, "I don't see any great harm in it. I shall have plenty of leisure; and it would be quite a treat to hear from New York occasionally. Well, yes; I'll answer if you write."

"Depend upon it, I will; just keep me posted up—who knows what might happen! And now I'm off. I shall not see you again, so good-by!"

He shook her warmly by the hand and hurried away.

"A nice girl that," he mused as he went.

"A splendid fellow," soliloquized Doris; "and won't I make a man out of him one of these days?"

Highly elated with the progress she had made upon the unsuspecting Justin, Doris skipped into the house, singing the "Gay Troubadour."

"Mercy's sakes!" cried Philinda, who was mixing some biscuits for tea; "that gal's just like quicksilver. They don't make 'em much smarter!"

Time passed quietly on at Sea Cliff, with no untoward events to disturb its serene monotony. The summer faded, autumn waned, and the desolate winter held its brief sway, yielding in time to the balmy breath of spring. Great events were transpiring in the country, and their echoes penetrated even into the quietude of Sea Cliff.

The surrender of Fort Sumter set even that quiet locality all ablaze. Philinda bustled into the sitting-room, where the

captain was reading and Cecilia and Doris sewing. She had been marketing at Keyport, and came back primed with news.

"Mercy's sakes!" she exclaimed, as she dropped breathlessly into a chair; "the country's in a dreadful state! Major Anderson has surrendered Fort Sumter; the war's begun; yaniky's let loose; and Mark Brander has enlisted on board the gunboat 'Pequot.' Good land of Canaan, what *air* we all coming to?"

"Mark enlisted?" cried Cecilia and Doris in a breath.

"Brave boy!" exclaimed the captain, with approval. "Were I ten years younger, I would have done the same."

"But should he get killed?" cried Cecilia apprehensively.

"Fortune of war!" said the captain. "His chance of life is as good as any one's. All who go to battle do not get killed."

"How his mother will miss him!" exclaimed Cecilia.

"That's just what I said to her," responded Philinda. "After doing my marketing, I drove up to Mrs. Brander's, and just stepped in to have a little chat with her. She told me herself that Mark was going. Captain Van Pelter, an old friend of Mark's, is going as captain of the "Pequot,' which they are going to turn into a gunboat, and he offered Mark a situation as master's mate, which Mark, after consulting his mother, accepted. 'Good sakes!' says I, 'Mrs. Brander, the boy may get killed; and then what will you do?' We owe something to our country,' says she. 'Mark wishes to go, and I cannot deny him. Harry, who is now quite recovered, and I can get along very nicely. Besides, Mark expects to make a great deal of prize money capturing blockade-runners, which he has promised to send us. We trust that Providence will spare his life; but should he be taken from us, we will have the consolation of knowing that he died in defence of the country that gave him birth!' A superior woman—a very superior woman—is Mrs. Brander."

Philinda blew her nose loudly,—a way she had when excited by any unusual emotion.

"A brave lad!" repeated Captain Manly. "If life is spared that boy, he'll make a name in the world, mark my words."

"But the risk is dreadful!" faltered Cecilia.

Tears welled in her eyes; and, anxious to conceal her emotion, she arose hastily and left the room. Philinda followed her, to attend to the household avocations.

"What ails Cecilia?" asked the captain curiously, having observed her emotion, in some wonder.

"A very simple thing," answered Doris, who stood on the most familiar footing with the captain In fact, he regarded

her almost in the light of another daughter. "She is worried at the peril to which Mark Brander will be exposed in his new career."

"Why should that worry her?"

Doris determined to sound the captain, ascertain his sentiments, and, if possible, do a good turn for her friend.

"Well, then, I strongly suspect that Cecilia is in love with Mark Brander," she said guardedly.

"You don't say so?" cried the captain excitedly. "She never said anything to me about it."

"Of course not. She scarcely knows her own heart yet. I have long suspected it; and her agitation at Philinda's news just now convinces me of the truth of my suspicion."

"So Mark has been making love to her, has he? the sly rogue! I never should have thought it."

"He make love to her? Good Lord! not he. He is too bashful for that. He has not opened his lips to her upon the subject."

"The rascal! I'll make him open his lips the next time I see him."

"Now don't be angry: he couldn't help it."

"Not help it? The idea of his presuming to fall in love with my daughter!"

"Just as I supposed. I told Cecilia that you would never consent."

"Oh, you did? You have got a knowing head on those young shoulders. And what did she say?"

"That she would never wed without your consent; but that you would not refuse."

"Ah! she don't know me as well as you," said the captain grimly.

"She isn't like me."

"No. Why, what would you do?"

"Run away."

"Ah! it 's lucky I'm not your father. Halloa, there 's Mark now coming up to the landing in his boat. Just run down and tell him that I want to speak with him—that I want to buy his boat."

"You wouldn't be so cruel now as to blight youthful affection, would you?" exclaimed Doris pathetically.

"Youthful pickles!" shouted the captain. "I am executive officer here: so just obey orders, or I'll have you keel-hauled. I'll soon settle this business."

Terrified by this mysterious threat, Doris hurried precipitately from the room. Never had she seen the captain in such a rage.

She performed her errand, despatched Mark into the captain's presence with a bewildering hint to mind what he was about, and then sought Cecilia.

"It's all over with you, my dear," she cried excitedly. "The captain has found out all about it, and he is in a glorious rage. Mark is to be soundly rated for falling in love with you, and I'm to be 'keel-hauled;' and gracious only knows what that is!—something dreadful, I suppose."

"What in the name of goodness do you mean?" asked the bewildered Cecilia.

After a deal of questioning, Cecilia succeeded in extracting from Doris the particulars of her interview with the captain.

"Oh, Doris! how could you be so rash?"

"Now don't reproach me; I did it all for the best. Who would have thought the old sea-lion would have shown his teeth at such a fearful rate? Have you got a dictionary handy?

"No; why?"

"I want to find out the meaning of 'keel-hauled.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RING ENGRAVED "CECILIA."

MARK BRANDER came into the captain's presence with a free and fearless step.

"Give me your hand, Mark," cried the captain; "I honour you. You have answered your country's call like a hero! Going on board the 'Pequot,' eh?"

"Yes, captain—as master's mate, with your old friend, Van Pelter."

"Ah! that will lead to an anchor on the shoulder before long, eh?"

"I hope so."

"It's in you, Mark. War is a great elevator; it will bring forth talent that the country little dreams it possesses. By the way, don't you want to sell your boat? You will require money for an outfit, you know."

"Such was my intention, if I can find a purchaser. I fear, though, that I shall have to sell her at a great sacrifice."

"Not a bit of it. Set your own price, and I will buy her."

"You! captain?"

"Of course. I am just as anxious to serve my country as

you are; and how could I do so in a better way than by assisting to fit out one of her gallant defenders? I will give you one hundred dollars for your boat. Is that enough?"

"Too much, captain. I cannot take advantage of your liberality."

"Tush! anything is worth what it will bring—that's the rule of the market. Take the money, and say no more about it. And now I have a crow to pick with you, young gentleman," added the captain, putting on a very stern look.

"With me?" asked Mark in surprise.

He little dreamed what was coming.

"Yes, sir, with you. I have heard a very strange story about you."

"About me?"

"Yes, sir; I am credibly informed that you are in love with my daughter!"

Mark was taken completely by surprise at this unexpected assertion, and could not conceal his embarrassment from the captain's keen eyes.

"You look guilty," pursued the inexorable captain; "then I am to presume the information correct?"

Mark could not dissemble; his course thus far through life had been open and straightforward, and he would not deviate from it now.

"Captain," he said with manly diffidence, "I will be frank with you. I *do* love your daughter. I have felt my heart drawn irresistibly towards her from the first moment I beheld her. I have struggled with this passion, knowing the vast difference in our lot in life, but in vain. How you have gained the knowledge I know not, for I have never breathed it to mortal ear. I thought the secret safely concealed in my own breast, and should have quitted this place without revealing it, had you not forced me to the disclosure. But you need not harbour apprehension; your daughter is not likely to waste one thought upon such an insignificant person as myself."

"Ah! there's the worst of this business; the person who disclosed your passion to me—a woman, of course; they are always at the bottom of everything—also informed me that Cecilia is actually in love with you."

"In love with me? Impossible!"

"You're too modest; I don't see anything improbable in a girl falling in love with a handsome, likely young fellow, though he is only a fisherman. She loves you, I tell you."

"Loves me!" echoed Mark with sparkling eyes.

"Now, I suppose, that I have informed you of that fact, you'll 'cut her out' from under my guns, marry her, and then snap your fingers at the old hulk?"

"No, captain; I shall go away with a greater incentive to exertion, with the hope that I may return more worthy of her, that I may win a position that will enable me to aspire to the honour of becoming your son-in-law."

"You are worthy of that honour now, Mark Brander. There is the ring of a true manhood about you, and, rich or poor, I know no one to whom I would sooner confide Cecilia's happiness than yourself. You have my free permission to win her troth—it will inspire you in the coming struggle—and depart as her affianced husband. It were better not to wed until the war is over; six months will serve to put down this insane rebellion; but suit yourselves in that particular. When do you leave?"

"To-morrow."

"Scarcely time to get married in, and attend to other matters. Call and see me again before you go. Here is the hundred dollars for the boat. Give my love to your mother."

Mark withdrew in a bewildered state. He could scarcely trust the evidence of his own senses. Passing the parlour door, Doris called him in. He entered, and then paused confusedly. Cecilia was seated by the window. Her curtsey of acknowledgment was very timidly given.

"Now, what did the captain say to you?" demanded Doris eagerly.

"Excuse me," said Mark gravely, "but I can communicate that only to Miss Manly."

Doris looked first at one and then at the other, and then, like a sensible little body as she was, quietly left them to themselves.

"What did my father say to you?" asked Cecilia, with faltering voice and heightened colour.

Mark's heart palpitated, and he felt strangely weak, but all the bashfulness and diffidence was gone. Love's eyes are keen, and he saw nothing in the lovely face before him—radiant with the crimson flushes that came and went like sunbeams at play—to cause him any apprehension.

"He told me, Cecilia," he began,—and she started perceptibly at hearing him, for the first time, address her by her Christian name—"that he had heard I loved you."

"And what did you reply to that?" demanded Cecilia softly.

"That it was true, and I was neither afraid nor ashamed to own it."

Cecilia's eyes were lifted for one moment to Mark's, and instantly withdrawn; but that one glance was enough. It encouraged him to speak further.

"That was not all he told me."

"What more?"

"He told me that he had also heard that you had condescended to bestow your affection upon the humble fisherman. Is it true?"

"I cannot deny it," she murmured; "for, like you, Mark, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to confess it."

Let us pass over Mark's raptures at this confession,—I fear the reader might think them insipid. Lovers' rhapsodies are generally considered so.

"Was my father very angry?" continued Cecilia.

"Not he. He is the noblest of men. He gave me full permission to seek your love, and, if successful, to obtain your plighted faith. Oh! Cecilia, assure me that your love is mine,—give me the assurance that you will become my wife when peace dawns upon our distracted country, and you will send me with additional nerve and courage into the fray, with the proud consciousness that your pure prayers will shield me in the battle's hour, and bring me back, unscathed, to receive the brightest reward the world can offer,—a true woman's love!"

"But should you fall?"

"Then your tears must consecrate my memory, and the thought that I died in my country's defence assuage your grief."

"I have not the heroism of your mother, Mark. I cannot send you, Spartan-like, to death, and hear of it unmoved. My love is too selfish. But I will endeavour to emulate her example, though dread forebodings fill my mind. Go, then, since duty calls you; happy—if my assurance will make you so—in the knowledge that my heart is all your own. I here exchange my plighted faith with yours, in weal or woe, in life or death, yours ever,—only yours!"

A few more words—an earnest pressure of the lips—and Mark found himself in the open air. The sky seemed brighter, the air more balmy, and the earth was buoyant beneath his springy footfalls, so intoxicating was his joy. He was to come again on the morrow, at noon, to say farewell for an uncertain length of time.

That morrow came clear and cloudless. Cecilia awaited his arrival, in the porch, with a beating heart. Doris—her straw hat all awry—came hurrying through the fields.

"Oh, Cecilia!" she exclaimed, quite breathless. "The strangest incident!"

"Has anything happened to Mark?" cried Cecilia apprehensively.

"Rather. See what he has lost!"

She placed an old-fashioned plain gold ring in Cecilia's hand.

"What is this?" asked Cecilia.

"Just you tease him about it when he comes."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that is the ring you gave him."

"I? I never gave him a ring."

"You never did? Why, then, you must have lost it. It is yours, for your name is engraven on it."

Cecilia examined the ring curiously. On the inside was engraven in quaint characters the name *Cecilia.*

"This is very strange!" she exclaimed. "Doris, not only did I not give this ring to Mark, but I never saw it before."

It was Doris's turn to be astonished.

"If the ring is not yours, how comes it that your name is engraven on it?"

"I really have no idea; but the ring certainly is not mine. Where did you get it?"

"In the footpath leading across lots to Keyport. I thought I would take a walk and meet Mark on his way here. As I was going along, what should I see glistening in the grass but that ring. I picked it up and examined it, and, finding your name in it, I naturally concluded that you gave it to Mark yesterday, and that he had dropped it on his way home. Thinking it would be a good joke to torment him for his carelessness, I hurried right back with it. Of all the strange things! Who can it belong to? Do you know anybody else hereabouts named Cecilia?"

"I do not; but there probably is."

"I don't think so. If I was inclined to be superstitious, I should think that some fairy had thrown that ring in my way, so that you could give it to Mark for a keepsake."

"It is very strange. See, it is an old-fashioned make, and looks quite ancient."

"I have it!" cried Doris suddenly. "As sure as you are born, that was your aunt Cecilia's ring, and the captain must have dropped it."

"Good heavens! such must be the fact. I will return it to him."

"Don't you do anything of the kind. You know how the mention of her excites him. The loss of the ring is to him the withdrawal of a bitter memory. Give it to Mark as a keepsake —it won't go out of the family, you know—and it is the most appropriate one you could make him. Besides, I owe the captain one for the way in which he humbugged me about you and Mark. So let's 'keel-haul' him by keeping the ring and not saying a word about it."

"Do you think it would be right?" hesitated Cecilia.

"To be sure; why not?"

After some further debate, Doris conquered Cecilia's scruples, and, when he came, Mark was made happy by the present of the ring. After a few words with Cecilia, he sought the captain's presence. He found him in the little chamber.

The captain was not in his usual health that day. He had returned from his morning walk—his invariable custom, regardless of the weather—in a feverish and heated condition; but, notwithstanding, he received Mark cordially, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

In this pressure he felt the ring which Mark had thrust upon the little finger of his right hand.

"What have you there?" he asked, glancing at it with a startled look.

Not having been cautioned to secresy, as the girls had not foreseen this accident, Mark answered without hesitation—

"A ring given to me by your daughter, and engraven with her name, as a keepsake."

A moan broke from the captain's lips, and he sank back lifeless in his chair. Alarmed, Mark hastily summoned the household, and Philinda bustled about preparing the cordial. The captain was ghastly white, and scarcely breathed.

"Don't be frightened!" cried Philinda, as Mark, Cecilia, and Doris, expressed their apprehensions; "it's only one of his spasms—though it seems worse than usual; but I'll soon bring him out of it."

Pressed for time, Mark was obliged to take his departure before the captain revived. He shook hands with Philinda and Doris, exchanged a farewell kiss with Cecilia in the entry, and hurried away.

When Cecilia returned into the room the captain was just opening his eyes. He shuddered as he saw her young face bending over him.

"Philinda, thank you," he murmured feebly; "you are

very kind. Doris, leave me alone with Cecilia; I wish to speak with her."

Philinda tapped her forehead significantly, as much as to intimate that the captain was a little "luney" from the severity of the attack.

"Here's the cordial, Cecy," she said; "he may have a relapse; but I guess not."

She left the room, followed by Doris.

The captain roused himself with an effort, trembling violently.

"You look on me with eyes of love and kindness," he muttered. "Do you then love me still?"

"Why should I not?" returned Cecilia in wonder. "Believe me, my affection will never change."

He smiled feebly, and patted her fair head as she knelt beside him, supporting him with her circling arms, for he was very weak.

"Good child! good child!" Then—in a low whisper, and glancing cautiously around—"The ring that Mark had; where did you get it?"

"Oh! then you have seen it."

Cecilia briefly recounted how the ring had come into her possession. The captain improved wonderfully while he listened, and the startled, apprehensive look faded from his features.

"All's safe," he murmured; "they know nothing, and Mark has gone—will soon be far away. My child, the conjecture of Doris was correct; that ring was lost by me, and did belong to your aunt Cecilia. It was the sight of it that threw me into spasm. You see I tremble now even at the mention of it. Promise me, therefore, never to recur to the subject: banish it from your mind. Request Doris also never to breathe a syllable concerning it. If you would not have your father's death laid at your door, promise me this."

Cecilia did promise it unhesitatingly, to the captain's great satisfaction, and left him quite at ease. She had no difficulty in impressing on Doris's mind the necessity of secresy.

"Oh!" exclaimed she, "I'll be as dumb as an oyster. We've got an awful skeleton here, Cecilia, and it will come out in broad daylight before we are many years older!"

CHAPTER XI.

ACROSS LOTS.

PHILINDA required some article for household use in Keyport, and, finding the captain in a fair way of recovery, she had the carriage harnessed up and drove over to the village. She came back with the most astounding intelligence.

A murder had been committed in the vicinity of the village, and the whole community was in an uproar of the wildest excitement, which had speedily communicated itself to the impressible Philinda. She burst into the quiet household of Sea Cliff like a bombshell, and exploded with the intelligence.

"Squire Carnham has been murdered!" was her first salutation.

Cecilia and Doris were shocked and surprised at this intelligence, and overwhelmed her with questions. The captain, seated in his easy chair, and still pale and trembling from his late attack, received the news with indifference. Philinda was not slow in communicating all she had heard in regard to this dreadful affair.

Some labourers returning from their work, in the footpath across lots, had discovered the body of Hobart Carnham, partially concealed under some blackberry bushes, as if the assassin, seeking to hide the evidence of his crime, had become alarmed, and fled before completing his object.

It was a foul murder, there could be no doubt of it. His gold-headed cane was found lying beside the body, and with it the deed had been done. The temples were dreadfully bruised, the bones of the forehead being literally driven into the brain, and the skull fractured by innumerable blows. It seemed as if the assassin, with maniacal fury, had continued to batter the head long after life was extinct. There was no trace of a wound upon any other part of the body. Hobart Carnham had been beaten to death by his own cane in the hands of some powerful man.

His watch, pocket-book, and various papers, were found upon the body, clearly proving that robbery had not instigated the crime. It was evidently a case of personal revenge. Suspicion was at once excited, and fell upon Samuel Cully. There were very strong circumstances against him. He had passed the

night with the deceased at Goodtipple's hotel, in their usual carousal; and they had quitted the house together quite early in the morning: besides which, Cully had many times been heard to threaten the life of Hobart Carnham. True, people had regarded these threats as the maudlin ravings of a drunkard, but it appeared that he was in earnest after all.

A coroner's jury was at once empanneled; the evidence, what little there was of it, taken; and a verdict of death by blows from a cane in the hands of some person, supposed to be Samuel Cully, rendered. A constable was at once despatched in pursuit of Cully; but Samuel was nowhere to be found. His usual haunts were searched, but to no purpose; Cully had quietly disappeared. There was now no longer any doubt of his guilt; he had committed the murder, probably while crazy, under the influence of strong drink; and, sobered by the dreadful crime he had committed, fled. But he could not go far without money; and so well known he would soon be apprehended.

Justin Carnham was sent for, and arrived in the next boat. Though there had been little sympathy in the tastes and pursuits of the father and son, he could not but feel deeply his father's murder. He joined with the town authorities in offering a reward of one thousand dollars for the apprehension of the murderer, and then proceeded to arrange the funeral.

Though Hobart Carnham had not been much respected in his life-time, his sudden and fearful taking off martyrized his memory, and his funeral was largely attended; though, perhaps, some part of this was due to the respect that Justin held in the community, and was intended more as a compliment to him than as a tribute to the deceased.

Among those who attended the ceremony, greatly to Justin's gratification, was Philinda Kohog, Doris Woodland, and Cecilia Manly. Captain Manly himself was too unwell to attend. Ever since the last attack, brought on by the sight of that antique ring, his health had been quite feeble, and he had not ventured abroad.

The day after the funeral, Justin was surprised by a visit from Mr. Edson Brefe, a kind of speculating lawyer, who lived alternately between Keyport and New York. He was sitting in his father's chamber at the time this visitor was announced, sorting over the papers of the deceased, and trying to get some idea of his effects and property, which he found in a very confused state. He had Mr. Brefe shown up to him.

Mr. Brefe was an elderly man, quite bald, and very respectable-looking—rather Wall Streetish, dressed in black, and

carrying a large white-headed cane in his hand; he was a sleek, obsequious man, with a cunning eye, and a thin, parchment face, framed in by light bushy whiskers—altogether a foxy-looking man.

"A sad affair," he said in a soft, wheedling voice, as he took the chair which Justin proffered to him,—"a very sad affair indeed. The murderer not yet apprehended?"

"Not yet."

"No doubt of Samuel Cully being the man?"

"Circumstances point strongly against him; yet I am at a loss to understand what could have been his motive. My father and he were always the best of friends. Indeed, I have often wondered at his association with such a man."

"Presumptive evidence—the only evidence to be obtained in most murder cases—is very strong against Cully. Witness his repeated threats against the deceased."

"The sottish ravings of an inebriate. I have always considered Cully an imbecile—made so by strong drink—and as harmless as a child."

"Very likely; but, my young friend, if he did not commit the murder, who did?"

"Who, indeed? My father had no enemy in this vicinity, or any other, that I ever heard of. The only way I can reconcile this affair is, that Samuel Cully might have committed the crime in a fit of delirium tremens."

"Ah! a very acute suggestion, and might open a loop-hole for Samuel Cully to save his neck, as it would then be but manslaughter. But we shall get at him soon, and learn the whole truth. He is doubtless lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood; and the officers, stimulated by the reward, will quickly ferret him out."

"I trust so; and now to business, for my time is somewhat occupied. To what am I indebted for this visit, Mr. Brefe?"

Mr. Brefe coughed, and looked a little uncomfortable.

"Why, the fact is," he began, "I am afraid you will find my business of a very unpleasant nature; but of course I am not responsible for that. Business is business, you know. Thinking that you would be naturally anxious to settle up your father's estate, and understand just how much is left, I thought I would wait upon you; because, having been your father's legal adviser in his lifetime, I may be of some assistance to you."

"You are very kind. I was just examining his papers for that purpose. He appears to have kept his accounts very loosely."

"Extremely so, sir. Your father, if you will permit me to make the observation, was very careless in money matters, and extravagant beyond the limits of prudence, in consequence of which his estate is very heavily involved. There are mortgages on this property to the amount of twelve thousand dollars, which are due on the 15th of this month."

"Who holds these mortgages?" asked Justin, quite startled by this information.

Mr. Brefe coughed again. The subject appeared to perplex him.

"Various clients of mine," he answered. "As your father's legal adviser, whenever he became short of money I negotiated the loans for him."

Justin's brow darkened; he began to understand how this thing had been brought about — to realise that his father, through thoughtless extravagance, had become the victim of a harpy.

"This is a strange story you are telling me, sir," he said, his voice trembling with suppressed indignation. "You would have me to understand, then, that my father has squandered twelve thousand dollars in the last six years—for that is the time I have been away from home. And not only that twelve, but what other ready personal effects he may have had on hand, to say nothing of the profits of the farm? Really, I cannot conceive where all this money could have gone to."

"I can," returned Mr. Brefe. "It is the easiest thing in life to spend money. Nor has it all been squandered, either. Let me do my deceased client justice. There was your education, improvements upon the property, and various other items, which eat up money very fast; besides, the 'late' Squire was very liberal and profuse in his hospitality."

"It is useless to argue the matter," replied Justin sternly. "I have my own opinion in regard to it; but I am powerless to right the wrong. Let me understand just how I am situated, and how much of my father's estate will be left me."

Mr. Brefe fumbled in his pockets and drew out a large note-book. He then affixed a pair of steel-bowed eye-glasses to the bridge of his nose, and commenced an examination of the note-book.

"Here we have them," he said. "Mortgage No. 1, in favour of Theophilus Brown, for six thousand dollars, executed May 15th, 1856; five years to run. Mortgage No. 2, in favour of John Smith, executed May 15th, 1858, for five thousand dollars; three years to run. Mortgage No. 3, in favour of Frederick

Penny, for one thousand dollars, executed May 15th, 1860; one year to run."

"Making in all twelve thousand dollars, and all to be paid upon the 15th of May, 1861?"

"Exactly; and interest, which will be one thousand more.

"To-day is the 8th, consequently I have got just one week to pay the money in."

"Precisely. I thought I would give you time, and not come upon you unawares."

"And if I am not able to pay the money, as you know full well I am not, what then?"

"The mortgages will be foreclosed."

"Is there no chance to have them renewed?"

"None whatever. The property is scarcely worth eighteen thousand at a liberal valuation; sold under the hammer, as it will have to be if the mortgages are foreclosed, it will not bring over thirteen thousand."

"Just the amount of the mortgages and interest?"

"Exactly. Men look to make a little profit in these transactions; they don't lend their money for nothing: you can understand that."

"I can understand that I am ruined," answered Justin bitterly. "Fleeced, to speak plainer, out of a fine property which has been in our family for three generations, and which my father had no right to squander away. I doubt the legality of these mortgages."

"My young friend, the law is an intricate study, particularly perplexing to youthful intellects. I drew these mortgages up myself, and have no hesitation in telling you that you would not have a ghost of a chance in contesting them. That your father's conduct in this transaction was highly reprehensible I have no hesitation in affirming—much as I dislike impugning the memory of the dead. 'The evil men do lives after them,' as the Holy Book says,"—Mr. Brefe made the same mistake that a great many others do, of quoting Shakespeare for the Bible. "Your father has literally robbed you of your patrimony. He held it but in trust, to hand it down to you as it was handed down to him. You have no one else to blame but him. Men will lend money on good mortgages, and they will foreclose those mortgages if they are not paid when due—that's human nature."

"And human nature, in that worldly acceptance, has no heart."

"Not even a gizzard!" affirmed Mr. Brefe.

"Well, Mr. Brefe, I can only—as the poor doomed ones in olden times used to shake hands with their executioner, and forgive him for the service he was about to perform—thank you for being kind enough to take the trouble to come and tell me that I have not a cent in the world. Fortunately the war has opened a new career before me. I have been offered a commission, which I shall now accept; and who knows but I may win with my sword a better estate than this I am now forced to resign."

"I trust you may," returned Mr. Brefe, rising from his seat with pleased alacrity. He had found the young man so much more tractable than he had anticipated. He had expected some hard words and harder epithets—not that they would have troubled him much, as he was accustomed to such things; still, it was more pleasant not to hear them, particularly when one has the painful consciousness that they are true. "I trust you may," he said; "and now, having fulfilled an unpleasant duty—believe me, a very unpleasant duty, but a lawyer is his clients' slave—I have the pleasure to wish you a very good morning."

Mr. Brefe bowed himself obsequiously out of the room.

"The old scoundrel!" exclaimed Justin, with a feeling of relief, when he was gone. "He has swindled my father with a vengeance; for I have no doubt the mortgages are all in his hands, though drawn out in different names. It is a plain case of robbery! But what can I do? Contest the mortgages, and enter into an endless course of litigations which would last a lifetime, and leave me about enough to buy a coffin at the end of it? Better let all go at once, and begin life with clean hands and an unruffled temper."

With these sage reflections, which were really a credit to the young man, he resumed his occupation of endeavouring to assort and arrange his father's scattered papers. He was not suffered to remain long alone, however, as Doris Woodland was announced; and, surprised at a visit from her, he hurried down into the parlour to receive her. She looked a little shy, for her, as she returned his warm greeting.

"That is a friend indeed that comes out in a storm to greet us," exclaimed Justin, "as some poet expresses it, but in choicer language; but no matter, as Timothy Toodles says, 'the sentiment 's the same.'"

"You see," said Doris, "I was out for a walk, and coming by, like Paul Pry, I thought I'd just 'drop in.' You know you are under a kind of bar at our house ever since the Cecilia business, so, as you could not come to us, I thought I would come

to you. You know the old Mahomet-and-the-mountain business: Mahomet couldn't and the mountain did; that was the way, wasn't it? You're laughing; I've got it wrong, of course—it wouldn't be me if I didn't. But it don't matter. I wanted to have a little chat with you,—men folks are so dreadful scarce round here; and as I thought you might have some delicacy in coming to Sea Cliff after what has happened, I concluded to give you a call. But what did you mean by 'coming out in a storm?' Why, it's a lovely day! That was what tempted me out for a stroll."

"Figuratively speaking, my dear Doris," answered Justin. "I took you into my council and confidence once before, and, if you have any curiosity, I will again."

"Curiosity? aint I a woman? Let's hear."

Justin briefly explained to her the visit of Mr. Edson Brefe, and the unwelcome intelligence he had communicated. Doris was loud in her expressions of sympathy, and somehow Justin felt quite relieved in mind at having thus unburdened himself. It was as if he had cast off his load of care upon another who was stronger and more able to bear it than himself. After half an hour's chat Doris took her departure.

CHAPTER XII.

PHILINDA MAKES A DISCOVERY.

When Doris reached home the family were just about sitting down to dinner. She took her accustomed place, and soon made the family circle acquainted with the misfortune which had befallen Justin Carnham.

She found sympathizing hearers, but none seemed so much interested as Captain Manly. He questioned her eagerly, until he had learned all that she could tell. Philinda was greatly exercised at the information.

"It was just like Hobart Carnham," she said. "He never did care a straw for anybody but himself. The idea of squandering all his property, and leaving that young man with nothing but a good education and the clothes he's got on his back! It must be a dreadful pull-back to him."

"He bears it with great equanimity," returned Doris; "and seems to have no fears for the future."

"Oh, he's smart!" rejoined Philinda; "Justin was always a

likely lad. He'll have to take off his coat and work a little now, that 's all; and it'll do him good."

Thus they discussed the misfortune of their neighbour; but the ladies little dreamed what an impression this misfortune had created on the captain.

The next morning Abe Brown, the captain's hired man, brought Justin a note. The writing was unknown to him.

"Where did you get this, Abe?" asked Justin in some surprise.

"The capting gin it me to bring over to you," answered Abe; "and I was to wait for an answer."

"From Captain Manly?" exclaimed Justin; "what can he have to say to me?"

His busy imagination at once conjured up the idea that the captain had reconsidered his restrictions in regard to Cecilia, and that the note contained his apologies and a request to renew his visits. He tore the note open, and read it in utter astonishment. It contained these words :—

"Justin Carnham, Esq. Dear Sir,—I have heard from Miss Woodland of the embarrassment which your father's thoughtlessness, to use a mild word, has placed you in. As his old friend, allow me to offer my assistance. I will loan you a sum sufficient to pay the demands against your estate on your own personal security; or, if you prefer it, I will take a fresh mortgage on the estate at the lowest rate of interest, to run for any number of years you choose. Should this proposition suit your views, my solicitor, Mr. Blackster, of New York City, is authorized to furnish you with the requisite amount, and prepare the necessary papers. Truly yours, NELSON MANLY."

It was salvation, as it would preserve to him his childhood's home until his own exertions should free it from all involvement. He had no hesitation in accepting the captain's offer, so he sat down and penned the following reply :—

"Captain Manly. Dear Sir,—I accept your proposition with pleasure, and the most heartfelt gratitude. I will wait upon Mr. Blackster in New York. Respectfully yours,

JUSTIN CARNHAM."

He despatched the note by Abe, and then sat down to consider his future prospects.

Doris, ever at hand, and always inquisitive as to what was going on, saw Abe returning with the note, questioned him, and learned that he had carried a note from Captain Manly to

Justin Carnham, and was bringing back the answer. Her curiosity was at once excited. She knew it would be useless to question the captain, so she determined to favour Justin with another call, and share a little more of his confidence. The reader need not be informed at this stage of our story that she took a great interest in Justin Carnham.

He received her in his usual pleasant manner. Indeed, in the isolation caused by his sudden bereavement, he had come to regard her as a very dear friend.

"My dear Doris," he said, "your visits are like gleams of sunshine in a cloudy day—they gladden and cheer me. You are not so worldly-minded yet as to desert a ruined friend."

"It isn't my style. Never say die! You are not ruined yet. You have youth, health, and strength; the world is all before you. If you have lost one fortune, you have plenty of time to make another."

"I'm a fortunate young man," said Justin earnestly.

"How so?" asked Doris curiously.

"In having such a spirited counsellor as yourself."

Doris blushed with delight.

"Do you know I almost regard you in the light of a sister?"

"Let me be a sister to you."

"With all my heart. A brotherly affection is all I have left to bestow."

"Poor fellow!" Doris's eyes sparkled merrily.

"The first and only love of my life was bestowed upon Cecilia Manly: I shall never love another woman!

Justin said this with great sincerity.

"What a pity!"

"Why so?"

"I was only thinking what a nice husband you might make some little woman one of these days."

"No, Doris; I shall never marry—unless I marry Cecilia, and there is little hope of that."

"Precious little!"

"Who can say? Who knows what changes time may bring about? Already the captain seems more friendly-disposed towards me."

"In what way?"

Justin explained the correspondence between himself and the captain.

"Now, little sister," he added, "you shall know my plans. To-morrow I depart for New York. I shall wait upon Mr. Blackster, and get him to cancel the mortgages which that old

scoundrel Edson Brefe holds, in favour of one for the captain of ten years, with the privilege of redeeming it at the end of five, in which time I hope to repay every cent. I shall place the property in the care of Mr. Marsh, my next neighbour, who will take the best of care of it; indeed, he has been farming the land on shares for my father for some time. The house itself I shall shut up just as it is, for I am not likely to occupy it for some time."

"Why not?"

"Because I am going soldiering."

"Going to turn soldier?"

"Not exactly turn soldier, as I am one already—a holiday one, it is true, but still pretty well versed in Hardee's tactics. For a number of years I have been a member of the crack regiment of New York City—the famous seventh. At present I hold the grade of second lieutenant."

"How well you must look in your uniform!"

"Not badly, I have been told. My regiment is even now in the field for the defence of Washington, and I should have been with them but for this unforeseen occurrence. I shall join them at once, and on the return of the regiment—its term of service is brief—should the war continue, I will raise a company and obtain a captain's commission."

"And get to be a general, in time? won't that be nice!"

"Very; if I only have luck, and don't get popped off too soon. Supposing I should return a general at the end of the war, don't you think that would make some difference with Cecilia, eh?"

"Not a bit. I am free to tell you now what I could not before; and as a sister, it is my duty to prevent you from nursing vain hopes which will only end in disappointment. He may come back an admiral with a foul anchor before your general's stars."

"He! who?"

"Cecilia's lover: don't you remember, I told you she had one?"

"So you did, but I had forgotten. Who is he?"

"She is engaged to Mark Brander."

"Mark Brander!—the fisherman? You astonish me."

"I thought I should. The fisherman now wears one of our Uncle Samuel's blue jackets, with a white anchor in each corner of the collar, and is master's mate on board the 'Pequot, commanded by Captain Van Pelter; and, if that man hasn't been named in vain, he's likely to *pelt* the enemy out of any quantity of prize money."

"What does Captain Manly say to all this?"

"Bless you! it is all his doing. He brought it about himself, and it has his entire sanction."

"You tell me wonders. Refuse an alliance with one of my family, and accept an humble fisherman who cannot tell even who his father was!"

"It is so. Now you see how little hope you have of winning Cecilia. Take my advice and banish her from your mind. There are plenty of pretty girls in the world—this war will make the men scarce—there are plenty of chances left for you."

"Thank you," returned Justin drily, "but I shall not avail myself of them. Assure yourself of one thing, Doris, when I *am* married, you shall be present at the ceremony."

"Oh! I intend to be."

"And now, return my sincere thanks to Captain Manly for the great service he has rendered me—by the way, I can thank you, too, for bringing it about, by making my difficulties known. Say farewell to Philinda and Cecilia for me. I shall write to you the first opportunity, and shall expect an answer."

"Of course—full of good counsel. I'll not only be a sister to you, but a mother also!"

They parted lightly, with smiles upon their lips, but when Doris reached Sea Cliff, she hurried up into her chamber, sat down, and had a good cry all to herself. With all her volatility she could but reflect upon war's dreadful chances, and the anguish that would rend her heart to hear of Justin Carnham's death.

It came up very stormy that night, the rain fell heavily at intervals, and the fierce gale shook the house to its very foundation. Philinda could not sleep: in her night wrapper she sat by her open window gazing out upon the storm. Vivid flashes of lightning occasionally lit up the surrounding darkness.

Philinda's room was between the captain's and the girls' in the second storey, the single window leading out upon the balcony. She had extinguished her light, and sat in the dark. The girls' room was also dark—but a light gleamed from the captain's. He was in the habit of sitting up quite late and reading.

In a gleam of the lightning, to her surprise and alarm she saw a man's head cautiously raised above the balcony rail. What could it mean? an attempt to rob the house? Robbers were a scarce commodity in that quiet neighbourhood. And yet why not? A murder had been recently committed: why not a robbery? Philinda was naturally courageous. She crouched down beside her window and watched, with every sense keenly on the

The man raised himself over the balcony rail lightly, and as noiselessly as a cat; as he did so, another flash revealed his features plainly. Philinda almost cried out in astonishment She knew the face well,—pale, ghastly, haggard, and marked with a wild, hunted look, but still unmistakably the face of Samuel Cully! What should bring him to Sea Cliff at that hour, and above all, how had he contrived to remain in the vicinity and elude the vigilance of the officers?

The outcast approached the captain's window cautiously. Philinda could see, as he stood in the light, that he was reduced almost to a skeleton, and his clothes were nothing but dirty tatters. He had evidently suffered greatly from his forced concealment. He peered in at the captain's window and called upon him in a loud whisper. The captain came to the window.

"Who is it?" he said.

"It's me, captain—what's left on me."

"My God! Cully? is it you?"

Through wind and storm, with senses all acute, Philinda heard the strange dialogue that followed.

"Cap'an, I can't stand it any longer. I've been hiding up Chesequake Creek, and living on mussels, till I'm nearly starved. I don't want to give myself up—you know how guilty I am—can't you help me off?"

"I will try, for I do not think the crime of murder is on your soul; but circumstances are strongly against you."

"That's so, cap'an; and I s'pose they'd hang me any way."

"Are you hungry?"

"As a wolf."

"Remain here a short time, and I will procure you some food."

The captain left the room, and was gone about ten minutes.

"I've brought you some cold meat and bread. But here,—drink this first: it will prevent the food from hurting you."

"What is it?"

"Brandy and water."

"Not a drop, cap'an—I've had the horrors twice since that day. Ugh! it's taken the flesh right off from me. Give me the water without the brandy."

"This is pure French brandy—you need it as a medicine. Fear nothing; it will not renew your taste for liquor, for I doubt if you ever tasted anything like it before. Drink it as a cordial—it will put new life and strength into your veins, and you will need all your strength and courage to undertake your escape to-night."

There was a gurgling sound, as if Cully hesitated no longer, but was taking the captain's prescription.

"Oh! aint that nice? it warms me just like fire; and I was so cold before."

"Now, eat, while I describe a plan of escape,—the only feasible one I can think of. Eat slowly, and chew your food; don't gorge yourself; you have plenty of time. You are not a coward, are you?"

"I don't want to be hung—that's all I'm afraid of," answered Sam, his mouth full.

"You would dare death to escape the gallows?"

"I would face old Beelzebub himself!"

"Good! Now, listen: I will give you two hundred dollars—all the ready money I have in the house—and an old suit of clothes, which are whole and comfortable. Go down to the boat and change your clothes, unfasten her from her moorings, and steer for South Amboy: when you get out into the bay throw your rags overboard. On reaching South Amboy, turn the boat adrift and let her float wherever she will. Loiter about the town until you can get a train for Philadelphia. Once on your journey, push on—never pause—until you are beyond the reach of pursuit. Write to me when you are safely located, and I will remit you funds. Lead an honest life, Sam, for the future, and your conscience will acquit you for the past."

"That's the idea, cap'an,—if I can only reach South Amboy. But look what a sea there is! Do you think your boat could live through it?"

"Beyond a doubt! The wind is in your favour; the 'Cecilia' is a staunch, well-built craft, and would live in a gale on the broad ocean, while this is but a land-locked bay. Point her nose straight for South Amboy, and she'll scud there almost as quickly as the wind. Besides, should the worst happen, better be drowned than be hung."

"That's so, cap'an. If I am born to be hung, why, there's no danger of drowning; so I'll chance it."

The captain gave him the money and the clothes, and Cully departed the way he had come. Philinda maintained her vigil at the window, and could hear the loud breathing of the captain at his. She knew that he also watched vigilantly.

The storm showed no signs of abatement. The wind howled as if the voices of demons were on the blast, the rain came in fitful torrents, the thunder rattled, and the lightning flashed over surrounding objects with a sulphurous glare. It was a brave night for a murderer to put to sea.

"It 's just tempting the mercy of heaven," mused Philinda. "Sam'll never see South Amboy to-night, nor any other place, for that matter. There he goes, sure enough. I wish the lightning would come oftener. There he is—way out—got the mainsail close-reefed,—well, I'm glad he knew enough for that. There 's another flash; where is he? I declare! out of sight already—or else I can't find him, not knowing where to look. Lord! how bright the lightning is. No, I can't see the sail now; or if I do, I can't distinguish it from the white-capped waves. Good-by, boat! I don't ever expect to see you again."

Philinda, fairly beat out with the excitement of this nocturnal adventure, went to bed. But it was long before slumber came to her eyelids. The events of the night would keep running through her brain in strange confusion. She was surprised and bewildered by the captain's share in the transaction. She could not account for his readiness in assisting Samuel Cully, a proscribed murderer, to escape from the hands of justice, but finally ascribed it to his benevolence.

"That 's it," she said to herself; "he was too benevolent to see the poor old vagabond hung. What a good man he is!"

Satisfied with this reflection, she went to sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

TIDINGS FROM MARK.

THE next day the "Cecilia" was found hard aground at the mouth of Chesequake Creek. It was supposed to have drifted from its moorings, and was returned to the captain. The hunt for Samuel Cully was still continued with unabated energy, but no trace of that unhappy fugitive could be discovered.

The captain was quite poorly after that stormy night. No one but Philinda suspected the cause; but she prudently held her tongue. It wasn't her business, was her mental conclusion, and nobody else's.

Justin had departed for the seat of war, having arranged his property to his entire satisfaction. Doris had received a letter from him describing the first battle of Bull Run, in which he had participated as volunteer aide on General M'Dowell's staff. Later he wrote again, informing her that he had secured a captaincy in a new regiment attached to General Sherman's division, and expected to be ordered South. A long interval

elapsed before his next letter; and when he wrote again, it was from Port Royal, which had just been captured by the Federal forces.

At the same time Cecilia received a letter from Mark, dated off Hilton Head. The young men had both been in the same battle, which resulted in the capture of Port Royal and Hilton Head Island; and yet, from the tenors of their letters, it was evident they had not encountered each other. This was not to be wondered at, however, considering that one was in the land, the other in the naval, service.

Mark's letter contained some rather strange intelligence. We quote from its contents:—

"I will pass over the battle," he wrote, "in which, thanks to the manœuvres of our skilful old admiral, brave Dupont, resulted in the reduction of the rebels' batteries at Hilton Head. The newspapers will give you a better account of it than I can, as I was too particularly engaged at my gun to pay much attention to anything else. We have planted a firm foothold in the sacred soil of South Carolina—which is chiefly celebrated for sand and fleas in this locality—and it will be a long time before the 'rebs' can dislodge us. Our advance guard occupies the town of Beaufort—a handsome little place, which the Southerners have used as a kind of watering-place.

"I was one of a party that was sent up Beaufort River to explore that region and feel the country, to see if the rebels were in any force. The town is scattered along the river's bank; it is a salt-water river—more properly speaking, an arm of the sea, like the East River at New York. It is a perfect flower garden, and the air is redolent with perfumes. I got leave to go ashore, and while strolling along the main street a singular incident befell me.

"I had stopped before a lovely residence to pluck a red rose which was growing in the hedge, when a lovely girl appeared upon the verandah, beckoning to me in the most extravagant and grotesque manner. I was the more surprised at this, for, as a general thing, these haughty daughters of the South are apt to treat a blue jacket, or a blue coat either, with the utmost disdain. There was no misunderstanding her gestures; she desired to speak with me, and I could not do less than accommodate her. I lifted the latch of the little gate, entered, and advanced unhesitatingly up the flower-bordered path with the rose in my hand.

"'Oh, how could you!' she exclaimed reproachfully, as I drew near.

"'I don't see any great harm in it,' I replied. 'It is only a rose, and you seem to have plenty.'

"'Rash boy! I don't mean that. The town is full of Yankees!'

"'I know it.'

"'You do, of course; you are dressed as one. The disguise is admirable; and yet I tremble with apprehension for fear you may be detected. Come and see mother and Nettie.'

"She grasped my hand, and pulled me into an apartment upon the ground floor. I was too much bewildered to resist or explain, though it was quite evident to me by this time that I had been mistaken for some one else. In the apartment to which I was thus unceremoniously introduced were two ladies, one elderly, the other the very counterpart of my fair introducer. These lovely types of Southern beauty were twins.

"'Mother! Nettie!' cried my captor, 'here's Gerald come back, disguised as a Yankee sailor. It would be funny if it was not so dangerous.'

"'Oh, my son!' cried the elderly lady, falling upon my neck and kissing me; 'how could you be so rash?'

"I also received a fraternal salute from the fair Nettie before I could explain matters; but then I thought it was high time.

"'Where did you leave your father, and is he well?' asked the mother.

"'My father left me, madam,' I replied, 'some seventeen years ago, and has not been heard of since. You are all labouring under what appears to me a most preposterous mistake. I am not the person you take me for at all. I am a Yankee from New Jersey—we are all Yankees to you; my name is Mark Brander, and I belong to the "Pequot," at present picket-boat of Admiral Dupont's fleet.'

"There was considerable subdued screaming at this announcement, though they would scarcely credit my words. They each approached, and took a good look at me in turn.

"'You certainly are not my son,' said the matron; 'but the resemblance is strong that could even for a moment deceive a mother's eye.'

"'I declare!' exclaimed Nettie, 'you are as like Gerald as I am to Jennie.'

"Then I must be wonderfully like indeed,' I responded, with my best bow. 'It may be, perhaps, that some relationship exists between us; your father may have been a relative or connection of mine, which would account for the resemblance. Might I ask your name?'

"'Certainly, sir,' returned the lady of the house. 'Whatever your country or profession, you have the air and bearing of a gentleman—which we were not led to expect in the detested Yankees. My name is Selma Rednarb, wife of Colonel Marc A. Rednarb, Confederate States Army; these are my daughters, Antoinette and Virginia.'

"I bowed low to this introduction.

"'I trust you will pardon my intrusion upon your privacy,' I said. 'Believe me, it was entirely unpremeditated upon my part.'

"'It was all my fault,' exclaimed Virginia; 'but then you are *so* like Gerald!'

"'Make no excuses," returned Mrs. Rednarb, with freezing politeness, as the old Southern feeling, particularly in the female mind, against the 'Northern invaders,' began to re-assert its sway; 'the mistake is entirely our own. You made a strange remark about your father. It appears that you lost him at an early age?'

"I briefly recounted my father's mysterious disappearance, and the supposition, which my mother so firmly entertains, that he had been lost at sea.

"Mrs. Rednarb became thoughtful, and I could see that the same suspicion which had already penetrated my mind had entered hers.

"'Pray, how old are you, sir?' she asked.

"'Twenty-three,' I answered.

"'Indeed! you do not look older than my son Gerald, and he is only nineteen. What kind of a looking man was your father?'

"'Very like what I now am, my mother has told me,—only he had more beard.'

"'Strange! do you know you have given an exact description of the appearance of Colonel Rednarb, as he looked when we were married?'

"'I never had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Rednarb, to my knowledge, madam.'

"'You do not remember your father?'

"'No, madam; I was but an infant when he left home, never to return.'

"She seemed more and more perplexed.

"'You can attend to your music, girls,' she said; 'I will see Mr. Brander—is that the name?'—I bowed—'to the gate.'

"She led the way to the verandah. Her eyes flashed, and her thin lips were compressed as she drew close to my side, and almost hissed in my ear—

"'I see you think Colonel Rednarb is your father.'

"'It appears very probable, madam,' I answered; for I did entertain that idea very strongly.

"'It is very improbable!' she exclaimed angrily; 'Colonel Rednarb was never in the North.'

"'Are you sure of that?' I asked quietly. Her very anger made me doubt the assertion.

"'I tell you so,' she cried haughtily. 'Is not that enough?'

"'No, madam; for you may be mistaken.'

"'Even if he had—what then? Young men are reckless—he may have deceived your mother—for marry her he never could. What! a Rednarb, of the best blood of the South, marry a poor Northern girl? Preposterous!'

"She was reasoning more with her own fears than trying to persuade me.

"'Madam,' I said, 'pardon me any allusions to my mother's good name. She was legally married, as we can abundantly prove, to a man calling himself Mark Brander, whatever his true name may have been; and both myself and brother were born in wedlock.'

"'A brother!' she almost screamed; 'you have a brother?' She turned very white, even through her sallow skin, and her eyes looked tigerish. 'How old is he?'

"'Twenty-one.'

"'My God!' she said absently. 'Should this be true? A former marriage, and two boys, both older than Gerald!'

"'So it would appear, madam,' I answered coldly; for I had no pity for her after the slur she had cast upon my mother's good name.

"Her face brightened suddenly, and all the old haughtiness came back.

"'Why, what a child I am!' she cried, 'to alarm myself about this silly affair. Even if Colonel Rednarb was married to your mother, and you are indeed his son, you are an enemy in arms against the Southern Confederacy, and have no rights here that will be respected. You cannot obtain any of his property.'

"I had never thought of that—there was where the matter troubled her. I had rights—should it indeed prove as we suspected—beyond her children; for her marriage was illegal, her children illegitimate. It was a dreadful blow to her Southern blood. I could scarcely blame her for her feelings towards me; while for myself the indifferent opinion which I had ever entertained towards my father was increased and strengthened by this discovery.

"'Re-assure yourself, madam,' I hastened to say; 'I know not whether Colonel Rednarb is my father or not—nor do I care. I have no regard for that father who could so cruelly desert his wife and children. I utterly despise and repudiate him, were he a prince of royal blood, which I think you will consider on a par with the best family in South Carolina. I shall make no claim on him or his property. We have contrived to live so far without his assistance, and I think we can continue to do so. Rest easy, I shall never attempt to dispossess you or your children. Let us keep this secret between us, if it is one, and the world will never be the wiser. We have long looked upon him as dead—he is dead—to us!'

"After all, she had her better feelings. She grasped me warmly by the hand.

"'Bless you, and farewell!' she said tremulously. 'I shall have a better opinion of the Northerners from this day forth.'

"She re-entered the house, and I sauntered into the street again. I rejoined my comrades in a strange frame of mind. I could not doubt for a moment that I had discovered my father. Not only the resemblance between us—which was too striking to be the mere result of chance—but the very name proved it. Marc A. Rednarb—probably Marc Antony—Marc or Mark—it is the same name—and Rednarb spelled backwards is Brander. There is not a doubt of it in my mind.

"I have written a full account of this strange adventure to my mother, requesting her to send me the full particulars of her marriage, and some of my father's letters, if she have any. I am anxious to ferret the affair to the bottom, for my own satisfaction. The fortune of war may yet throw Colonel Marc A. Rednarb into our hands."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MARK.

In answer to Mark's last letter, Cecilia wrote giving an account of the murder, and other matters that she thought likely to be of interest to him. Among other things she wrote:—

"A strange change has come over my father. His health seems to be failing rapidly, and he has aged more in the last month than in the previous six years,—nor is the change in appearance only. His disposition seems altered, and he ha

grown moody and morose, fretful and peevish. Nothing appears to please him. He will speak to me in angry terms, and the next moment beg my pardon for his harshness. This is so unlike my good and indulgent father, as you knew him when you left, that the change grieves me much. But mind and health seem failing him. Philinda shakes her head gravely, when I question her, and says she thinks he is fast approaching his dotage. After consulting together, we concluded to request Doctor Fennel to visit us, as if he came to make a friendly call on the captain, and ascertain, if possible, the nature of his complaint; for that something is the matter with him there can be no doubt. The doctor did as we required, but little came of it. As far as bodily health was concerned, he said, there appeared to be nothing the matter with the captain. He seemed to be wasting away as if in a decline; but that might be the natural decay of years, as he was getting well on in life. His constitution, undermined by severe toil in his youth, might be giving way; and in such cases the decay was always sudden and rapid. The great difficulty was in his mind: he appeared to be labouring under some mental affliction; but there was no remedy for that—he could not 'minister to a mind diseased.' With this unsatisfactory intelligence the good doctor left us. I have strong apprehensions that my father will not live much longer; but I will not burden you with any more of these melancholy thoughts. Let me turn to brighter subjects."

In this connection an extract from a letter to Justin Carnham, written by Doris, may not be out of place.

"You ask me if anything has been heard of Samuel Cully. Not a word, not a sign. The officers are at fault; and it is my opinion that he is either dead or fairly out of the way. As his body has not been found, the latter seems the most likely. Yet, how he could have contrived to get away without money or means seems a mystery to everybody. I was speaking to Philinda about it the other day, when she said, in her usual emphatic way: 'Take my word for it, Doris, that Samuel Cully will never be caught; he's too far off by this time.' I have an idea that she knows something about the poor wretch's escape, though how she should know it is more than I can say. But let him go; he carries his punishment along with him, as the Universalists say. Hanging would be no worse than the life of perpetual fear and apprehension that he must lead. The old boy himself has got into the captain; I never did see such a change; he has turned from a gentle breeze into a regular north-easter. He wants to 'keel-haul' somebody every hour of the day now.

He's so peevish, and fretful, and suspicious, that there is scarcely any living with him. Cecilia waits on him from morning until night with the patience of an angel. Philinda doses him with 'yarb' tea; and the captain swears like a trooper when inveigled into swallowing some of her 'filthy messes,' as he calls them. 'It 's bitter, captain,' says the indomitable Philinda; 'but it will do you good!' The only thing which seems to do him good is a liberal allowance of 'grog,' as he calls it. I presume you know what that is; so I will spare myself the trouble of a description. In fact, the captain retires about 'half seas over' every night. This is the most wonderful change of all, as he used to be so temperate.

"A singular circumstance happened the other night. It was a beautiful moonlight, and I sat at the open window enjoying the prospect, and thinking if the same moon was shining as brightly over Beaufort (you know you wrote that you had lovely moons down there), and if you were looking at it about that time. Cecilia was in bed and fast asleep—no romance in her composition, you know. Suddenly I heard some one talking in a very excited manner. I looked out of the window, and saw the captain in his night clothes, at his, talking and gesticu lating in a most extravagant manner to some imaginary person; for there was no one in sight. He kept this up for ten minutes or so, and then disappeared.

"I was so astonished at this that I had to speak to Philinda about it the next day. It was an old story to her: her room being next to the captain's, she had heard him on several occasions. It was nothing, she said: the captain had become a sleep-walker, and went back in his mind to his early days, fancied himself on the deck of his vessel giving orders to his crew. I remembered then, among the jumble of words, that I had heard the captain distinctly say, 'Take the boat and sail to South Amboy.' I have my own opinions of all these matters, which I don't like to put down on paper, as these elegant specimens of chirography might fall into other hands than those for which they are intended. All I will say is, that the family skeleton, about tired of its closet, is about to stalk forth in all its deformity; and, moreover, *you* are concerned in this mystery, which I hope will soon be developed. I think I have discovered the reason why Captain Manly was so averse to your union with Cecilia:—of that more hereafter. Of one thing be sure, Captain Manly has something on his mind that is slowly wearing him to the grave, and, if he does not die with the secret unspoken, we shall soon know all. Emulate Job, and—wait!"

The next letter from Mark contained more strange intelligence.

"It seems," he wrote, "as if all Keyport had joined in the attack on Charleston, for that is the next point we are after. The other day, who should I meet in Beaufort but Justin Carnham? He is captain in the —th New York Infantry. He was very glad to see me. I took dinner with him at his quarters, and we had quite a cozy time together. Nor is he the only one from Keyport. We have lately received some fresh men, and among them is Clam Dennis—the red-headed Irishman, don't you remember, that I threw into the water from Keyport dock the day we were out sailing. I mentioned the circumstance to Justin, for I saw by his grin that Dennis recognized me; and he told me I ought to keep a sharp look-out, as Irishmen of the low class were apt to be treacherous and revengeful. 'He might put a bullet through you unawares,' he said. I told him that I had not the slightest apprehension, and considered Dennis perfectly harmless. Should I detect him in any act of hostility, he will not escape so easily as he did at Keyport.

"And now for the strangest thing of all. Among these new men is one who, in figure and voice, is almost the counterpart of Sam Cully. Were it not for the colour of the hair, I should think it was indeed him. Sam's hair was the colour of tow, but this man's hair is as black as jet, and as coarse and as straight as an Indian's. He goes by the somewhat singular name of Plum Bird. Whether it is his real name or not I am unable to say. The first time I heard his voice I thought it was Sam sure. I questioned him pretty keenly, and he answered without any embarrassment, and with apparent frankness, until I became convinced that he was not the man I took him for. In one very essential point he does not resemble Sam,—he never drinks a drop of spirituous liquor, which was Sam's besetting sin. Yet the likeness is truly wonderful.

"Another circumstance still,—I might denominate this letter a packet of mystery,—while I was at dinner with Justin, he was suddenly attracted by the sight of your ring, which I wear upon the little finger of my right hand.

"'That ring looks very familiar to me,' he said. 'Allow me to look at it.'

"I drew the ring from my finger and handed it to him without hesitation.

"'Why, good heavens! it is the same!' he cried in astonishment. 'This ring belonged to my father. Where did you get it?'

"I told him that I had received it from you, and that he must be mistaken in fancying that it had belonged to his father.

"'Not so, Mark,' he answered; 'I know the ring too well to be deceived. Often, as a child, I have playfully wrested it from his finger, and spelled out the quaint letters "CECILIA" within. I missed it from his finger when I came home after his death, but thought it had been lost. How could it have come into Cecilia's possession?'

"'Perhaps your father may have given it to her,' I suggested.

"'Very like—very like,' he said, as he handed back the ring to me. 'I now begin to understand what Doris meant in her last letter, when she said I was concerned.'

"'Concerned in what?' I asked, not understanding these ambiguous words.

"'No matter,' replied he lightly; 'that is a family secret which you will know all in good time.'

"We exchanged no further words upon the subject. To-morrow we sail for Charleston, to look out for blockade-runners and assist in the siege of that hot-bed of secession. I will write again the next opportunity."

Cecilia carried the letter to the captain to read, as was customary with her; and on returning after a short absence, she found the captain laying back in his easy chair, and foaming at the mouth in a spasm, whilst the letter lay upon the carpet torn into infinitesimal shreds. She blamed herself for this, as she hastened to apply restoratives. She ought not, she thought, to have shown the letter, with its account of the ring she had given Mark. It was that had brought on this paroxysm.

There was one strange circumstance, however, which came to Mark's knowledge after he had written to Cecilia, which he refrained from communicating. It placed in his hands a fellow-creature's life, and he hardly thought that he was called upon to make it known. It happened in this way. He lay upon the deck, under the shadow of the bulwark, enjoying the moonlight, which is so lovely in that Southern clime. Two sailors of the watch were chatting, to pass away the silent hours, and the mention of a name led him dreamily to listen to their conversation.

"He's a queer cove, that Plum Bird," said one of the sailors.

"That 's so," responded the other.

"I can tell you a good joke about him."

"Can you? Well, I'd like to hear it, for I think he is about as funny as a basket of chips."

"You know he doesn't drink anything stronger than water."

"I know it, Tom; and I'll tell you what, I have a mighty poor opinion of a man that can't take his allowance of grog."

"Well, some of the mess noticed that he had a mighty mysterious way of going to his chest; and watching him one day, they saw him put away a bottle in a great hurry; and they began to think that Master Bird kept a private store of whisky, and drank it on the sly."

"More'n likely; most of these temperance men are fond of taking a sly nip."

"So they thought they would like to taste Master Bird's whisky, and one day, when he was ordered ashore in the captain's boat, they got out their keys, and succeeded in finding one that fitted the lock of his chest. They rummaged his chest, and there, sure enough, was a bottle."

"What was in it—whisky?"

"Not a bit of it. What do you think?"

"Brandy, perhaps."

"No; it wasn't liquor at all. You could never guess, if you kept trying until doomsday. It was a *bottle of black hair dye!* Wasn't that a joke? Ha, ha, ha!"

"A joke indeed—ha, ha, ha! So it seems that Master Bird dyes his hair? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes. Ha, ha, ha! So they put the bottle back just as they found it, and locked the chest again. Now, we have an awful rig on Master Bird. If you want to see him look queer, just tell him what beautiful *black* hair he has got. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Glorious! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark lay quietly and heard it all. The colour of the hair was now accounted for—Plum Bird was Samuel Cully! What should he do with the knowledge so strangely acquired? Denounce Cully as a murderer, and deliver him up to the hands of justice? Was it not his duty to do so? The thought perplexed him. Why should he hunt down this unhappy fugitive? He could not find it in his heart to do so. The criminal was in the service of his country, and a stray bullet from the enemy might at any time avenge society without his interference.

Whilst lost in these musings the watch was changed, without attracting his attention, and a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder. He looked up, and, bending over him, he saw the very object of his thoughts.

"Beg pardon, sir," said Plum Bird; "but the dew is falling, and it's mighty onhealthy to sleep in it, as I've heard."

"You've got fine *black* hair, Mr. Bird," replied Mark.

The sailor started as if he had received a galvanic shock.

"Blast 'em! he cried fiercely. "They've been at my trunk, and it 's a rig they are running on me."

"They do not know why you dye your hair; I do. Samuel Cully, I know you."

"Well, what if you do?" said Cully composedly.

"Then you do not deny it?"

"Why should I?"

"Cully, you do not act like a murderer."

"I am not one."

"Do you mean to say that you did not murder Hobart Carnham."

"Hobe Carnham was not murdered."

"Not murdered! Why, my letters from home informed me that he was."

"So everybody in Keyport thinks," returned Sam doggedly; "and I aint agoing to contradict 'em: besides, they wouldn't believe me if I did. But I tell *you* Hobe Carnham was not murdered; he was killed in fair fight, and he struck the first blow."

"Why, that alters the case entirely," cried Mark, with a feeling of relief. "That was only manslaughter at the worst. Why did you run away? Ten chances to one, you would have been acquitted."

"How was I to prove it? The word of a vagabond don't count for much in this world."

"True; I never thought of that. Then I am to understand that you killed Carnham in a drunken quarrel?"

"Just as you please. Now, what are you going to do about it? Have me arrested and sent back to Keyport to stand my trial? Cap'an Manly and Miss Cecilia won't thank you if you do, I can tell you."

"I do not understand how Captain Manly or Cecilia can have anything to do with the matter," answered Mark in some surprise. "However, we will not debate that question, as I have no such intention. Your secret is safe with me, and I will not betray you."

"I didn't think you would; and you'll be mighty glad you didn't, one of these days."

The words were ambiguous, but no threat was intended. The whole affair puzzled Mark. Absent from the scene, and ignorant of the particulars of Hobart Carnham's death, he could not exactly comprehend the words and actions of Cully. He

had neither the bearing nor manner of a man who had committed a great crime; yet that he was in some measure guilty, his flight had proclaimed.

"Let the past be forgotten," he said. "You have adopted a noble course to atone for whatever guilt may rest upon your shoulders. Heaven will surely accept of the explanation, if man does not. One piece of advice I will give you,—steer clear of Justin Carnham—he is in General Benham's division; should you meet, and he recognize you, he may think himself bound to avenge his father's death."

"Let me alone—I'll be careful. Not that I am afraid of Justin Carnham—he 's a better man than his father ever dared to be. Now, I'll give you a bit of advice in return. Look out for Clam Dennis; he 's got a grudge agin you, and I heerd him say the other night, when he'd been drinking, that he'll have it out of you."

"I'll keep an eye on him. Good night."

"Pleasant dreams! you're a plum bird, you are!"

Mark went below, and Plum Bird resumed his watch.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHANCE OF WAR.

It so happened that the Admiral had a great desire to ascertain what fortifications had been erected by the Confederates upon James Island to guard the approaches to the city of Charleston; but that was a piece of information not easily got at, as the Confederates were supposed to occupy the Island in great numbers, and the Federal General commanding the land forces did not like to land his army without some idea of the number and disposition of the enemy. To effect this there was but one way—to send a number of scouts ashore.

This was a hazardous undertaking, as the Confederates would treat such scouts as spies, and hang them in a summary manner; consequently, volunteers were not found in abundance for this office of danger. In this dilemma the general applied to the admiral, and the admiral appealed to his captains. Captain Van Pelter called for a half a dozen volunteers to undertake the scout, and Mark Brander, Plum Bird (as we will call him, seeing that he had adopted that name), Clam Dennis, and half a dozen others stepped forward. The crew of the "Pequot,"

tired of the monotony of their floating walls, were anxious for a cruise on shore.

Captain Van Pelter only required six men in all, which number was considered sufficient, so he selected Mark Brander, Plum Bird, Clam Dennis, and three others. Mark was placed in command of the party.

"Only bring in some important intelligence," said the captain confidentially to Mark, "and the admiral will make you an ensign."

Mark nodded his head intelligently; that was just what he was after.

The party were armed with cutlasses, a pair of navy revolvers each, and a Sharp's rifle. The calculation was that they could make a pretty good fight of it if it came to any difficulty.

They were landed on the Island in one of the ship's boats, which was to lie off the land for six hours, waiting their return. Three rifle shots, fired in rapid succession, was to be the signal of danger.

After advancing about a mile inland, they came to a road, which had the appearance of being well travelled. It was evident they were near some village or camp. Mark halted his party, stationed them in the thicket, with orders to keep a sharp look-out, and proceeded up the road with Plum Bird to reconnoitre.

They were absent probably an hour, when they were seen returning, and, just as they drew near the thicket, a rifle shot echoed sharply upon the air, and Mark threw up his arms with a shrill cry, and fell forward upon his face in the dust of the road.

Plum Bird swore in the most ferocious manner, and, assuming the command, dragged the body within the shelter of the trees, exclaiming—

"Cover, yer blasted fools, or some more on us will get picked off!"

The men, who had huddled in confusion around the body of the slain mate, instantly took counsel from this caution, and sought the shelter of the wood again.

"Now, keep your eyes peeled, and your fingers on your trigger. Blast these double-distilled, infernal, skulking, no livered cooters! We'll give 'em thunder, if they'll only show fight. Whoop! we are plum birds on a lily root!"

From this somewhat incoherent speech it will be seen that Plum Bird was in a high state of excitement. Strange to say, the sudden death of Mark had angered more than grieved him.

They waited patiently, watchfully, with nerves strained to their utmost tension, awaiting the approach of the foe, and burning to avenge their comrade's fall. So still was all around that they could hear the beating of each other's hearts. Yet the silence of that grand old wood remained unbroken. The long, pendant Spanish moss hung from the live oaks in wavy festoons, unruffled by a single breath of wind. The silence became oppressive—everything around was so lifeless and inanimate.

"Blast me!" exclaimed Plum Bird, "if I don't think we have been fired on by a bush whacker, who has cut and run. Hello! where's Clam Dennis?"

"Sure enough," responded Tom Parker, "where is he?"

"He was posted as sentry," cried John Mann.

Search was made for Clam Dennis, but he was nowhere to be found. A suspicion began to creep into Plum Bird's brain, and that suspicion was soon verified into certainty. Dennis's rifle was found upon the ground near the spot where he had been stationed. It was unloaded, and had been recently discharged. Dennis had paid off his old grudge, and deserted to the enemy.

"It's no use stopping here any longer," said Plum Bird, who by common acceptance seemed to have assumed command of the party. "That scamp has shot the mate, and gone over to the enemy. He'll raise the country on us in no time; and if we stop here we shall all be gobbled up. So we'd better take the body, and make tracks back to the boat in double quick time. Our expedition is played out."

In mournful silence they bore the body back to the boat. Mark had been a general favourite on board, and his sudden death had fallen heavily upon the hearts of his shipmates.

Captain Van Pelter was shocked greatly at the sudden and lamentable return of his scouts. He could scarcely believe that the cold corpse, with the cruel bullet hole disfiguring the fair forehead, was the same gallant youth with whom he had parted but a few hours before, so full of life and high enterprise. He could but think upon war's dreadful chances as he turned aside to dash away a tear.

Justin Carnham hurried on board, as soon as he heard the fatal news, to take a last look at one whom he already had begun to regard as a true friend.

"He wears a ring," he said to Captain Van Pelter, "which I wish to secure and send to his sweetheart, with the dreadful intelligence."

"Certainly," replied the captain.

When Justin came to look, he could not find the ring; it had been removed from the body. The sailors and Plum Bird were summoned and questioned concerning it; but they all declared that they knew nothing at all about it.

Plum Bird's voice attracted Justin's notice, and he gave him a scrutinizing look, which he bore unflinchingly; but memory was not strong enough.

"It appears to me," said Justin musingly, "as if I had seen you somewhere before—away off when I was a child."

"Very likely," replied Plum Bird stolidly; "I've been there."

This reply elicited a laugh even in that solemn scene. Justin turned away baffled. He was not as familiar with Samuel Cully's features as Mark had been. The Plum Bird was safe as far as he was concerned.

"This will be sad intelligence to send home," remarked Justin.

"Tell him not to be in a hurry to send it home," whispered Plum Bird in Captain Van Pelter's ear.

"What do you mean?" demanded the captain.

"Just clear the cabin of all but you and Captain Carnham, and I'll tell you."

This was done, and then Van Pelter turned anxiously to Plum Bird.

"What are you steering for?" he asked.

"Nothing much," replied Plum Bird coolly; only this,—I don't want Captain Carnham to write nome word that Mark Brander is dead, and make 'em all feel bad."

"Why not? They must know it sooner or later."

"Well, later will be soon enough for them, because Mark Brander, as far as heard from, happens to be *alive!*"

Justin and Van Pelter did not know what to make of this assertion.

"Are you mad, man?" cried Van Pelter angrily, "to try and persuade us that Mark Brander is alive, when his dead body lies before us?"

"That is not the dead body of *Mark Brander*," returned the imperturbable Plum Bird.

"Do you suppose we don't know his features?"

"Not only his features," added the captain, "but here are his clothes."

"The clothes, yes; but the body, *no*," rejoined Plum Bird, enjoying their bewilderment.

"Well, if that body is not Mark Brander's," exclaimed Van

Pelter, who was losing all patience, "who the devil is it, then?"

"That young man, as near as I can get it through my wool, is a kind of half-brother to Mark—whose missing father seems to have located somewhere in this vicinity."

"You seem to be rather intimate with Mark Brander's private history," said Justin, his suspicions again excited.

"Yes; he was dreadful fond of me, and told me all about it," returned Plum Bird drily. "Well, as I was saying, this young man appears to be Mark's half-brother, which accounts for his extraordinary likeness to the aforesaid. He was, poor young critter! a lootenant with the 'rebs.' When Mark and I left the rest, and went up the road, we heard a horse coming, so we just hid, and when he came up, surrounded him, and forced him to surrender. He was awful wrathy—but it was no use; we carried too many guns, and he was forced to knock under. He said his name was Gerald Redyarb, or some sich name, and that he was first lootenant in the Thirty-seventh South Carolina Volunteers, stationed at Secessionville."

"This is a strange story," observed Justin.

"I haint come to the strangest part of it yet—just you wait. Well, Mark asked me if I could tell which from tother, if their clothes were changed. I told him that it was as much as I could do to tell them apart just as they were. 'It appears, then,' says the young reb,' as pert as a cock-sparrow, 'that you are the infernal Yankee who intruded himself upon my family at Beaufort.' But Mark didn't take no more notice of him than if he hadn't spoken—which riled the youthful chip of chivalry considerably. 'Plum,' says Mark, 'I've got an idee.' 'Give it vent,' says I. The upshot of the matter was, that he had concluded to change clothes with the young reb, and ride boldly into the rebel camp; and, after chewing over the matter, I thought myself that it was a cute dodge, as his own mother couldn't tell 'em apart."

"I begin to comprehend this strange affair," observed Justin.

"So do I," responded Van Pelter; "and the idea was great!"

"Well, we took the lootenant into the bushes, and made him exchange clothes with Mark, who mounted his horse. 'Plum,' says he, 'don't be alarmed about me. I have deceived his own mother, and I have no doubt of being able to deceive his father, should I encounter him. Just you take the lootenant back to our party, and keep him as a hostage for my safe return. I will gather all the information I can, and return by nightfall.' Then

we made the lootenant give the countersign, and I marched him down the road, while Mark rode off."

"But how came you to kill the lieutenant?" demanded Van Pelter.

"I didn't kill him, and wouldn't neither, for it just upsets Mark's calculations; we have no hostage for him now, if they discover the cheat, and take him prisoner. It was that Clam Dennis did it."

Plum Bird related the manner in which Gerald Rednarb (for it was indeed he) had met his untimely fate. Justin threw some light on the affair by describing the trivial circumstance which had led to Clam Dennis's grudge against Mark Brander; and there the matter was ended for the present.

Another expedition was sent out to watch and wait for the return of Mark; but this time it was more formidable. It consisted of fifty men from Captain Carnham's regiment, and twenty from the "Pequot," led by Ensign Bates. The expedition was commanded by Justin Carnham. Plum Bird was among the "Pequot's" men, and acted as guide.

CHAPTER XVI.

FALSE COLOURS.

We will return to Mark. Mounted upon the lieutenant's steed, he rode boldly into the Confederate camp, giving the countersign as he passed the sentries, unquestioned and unsuspected. He gave his horse the rein, trusting to the sagacity of the animal to conduct him to the quarters occupied by the lieutenant.

The horse stopped in front of a large plantation house, and a bright, intelligent mulatto boy, who had been lounging on the verandah, came forward to take the steed, touching his gray military cap respectfully. This Mark judged to be the lieutenant's body-servant and orderly; but there was nothing about him military except the cap.

"De colonel has been askin for you, sar," said the boy.

"Ah, indeed!" cried Mark as he carelessly alighted. "Where is he?"

"In his room, Mas'r Gerald."

This information was rather indefinite to the disguised sailor. He was satisfied of one thing, however, there was but one

regiment in the place, the colonel, his supposed father, was in command, and evidently occupied this house as his head-quarters; the lieutenant had probably been attached to his staff, and occupied the same house. If so, it would simplify his line of action, and lessen the danger, as he should be brought in contact with but a few. He hoped the ladies were not there. He had no fear of deceiving the colonel, but he had some doubt of being able for a second time to blind a mother's searching eye.

He walked boldly up the steps and into the passage, jingling his sword sheath against his spurred heels. The design succeeded. A voice called to him through a half-shut door.

"Is that you, Gerald? Come in."

Unhesitatingly he pushed the door open, and entered the apartment from whence the voice had proceeded. It contained but one occupant, a middle aged man, slightly bald on the crown of his head, with luxuriant beard and whiskers. A handsome, portly looking man, clad in the uniform of a colonel in the Confederate army, lounging at ease in a large stuffed arm-chair. Mark's heart almost ceased to beat for a moment, and he trembled in every limb. This must be Colonel Rednarb. He felt that he was standing in the presence of his father.

"Ah, Gerald!" cried the colonel with animation, "I thought it was you. Take a cigar." He tossed a bunch towards him. "There 's a match. Sit down."

Mark seated himself and lit a cigar. He had acquired that habit on board the "Pequot."

"Now then," continued the colonel, "what success?—how did you make out?"

Mark was somewhat at a loss to answer this question, as he had not the slightest idea what the lieutenant had been trying to 'make out.' So he made the random reply of—

"Not much."

"Ah! you did not see any signs of the enemy attempting a landing."

Mark understood it then. The lieutenant had been taking a reconnaissance.

"I did not," he answered.

"Umph! They are sure to come this way; but I fancy they won't get far in this land of swamp and morass. We know the country so thoroughly that we can seriously retard them, even if they should come in strong force. They will find our intrenchment here a hard nut to crack; and if they will give us time, we'll make them stronger yet. Fearing an advance in this quarter, General Beauregard is going to send a thousand

slaves to work with pick and spade. They are drumming them up in Charlestown. This is our weakest point. They can never take Charlestown from the sea, even with their famous monitors. Admiral Dupont will find our sandbags proof against his iron-clads.

Mark had a different opinion on the subject; but he did not consider it advisable under the circumstances to express it. He had already learned enough to repay him for the risk he ran; but he was anxious to ascertain more, before taking his unceremonious departure.

"You know the Yankee fleet is hanging off the coast," he said, "with quite a large force in transports. Should they effect a landing, what force have we to drive them back?"

"Not as many as I could wish," returned the colonel. "They have sent our best regiments to Lee at Richmond. But I think we have enough. Here is my regiment, say about seven hundred and fifty men, fit for duty; three regiments at Secessionville; and the Charleston garrison and home guards, which would be sent to us if we were attacked by a large force. We know the country, fight behind intrenchments, which gives us an advantage equal to double our number; besides, our men know that they are fighting for their very hearthstones, and that makes them in earnest. Rest assured, my boy, it will take a large army,—more, in fact, than I think the north can spare in this quarter at present,—to drive us out of Charleston. To tell you the truth, I don't think they want the city at present, and their movement is only a feint to distract our forces and uncover Richmond."

Mark, not being in the confidence of the "powers that be," could not say how far the colonel was right in his surmises; but of one thing he felt assured, the colonel's regiment could be surprised and captured, and a lodgment effected upon the island, which would serve as a base for future movements. Having ascertained this, he was anxious to get away as quickly as possible.

While he was trying to frame some excuse for another ride to the beach, a Confederate captain came hastily into the room.

"What is it, Gist?" demanded the colonel, judging by his haste that he brought some intelligence.

"The Yankees *have* landed," answered Gist, "and one of their number, a sailor from the gunboat 'Pequot,' has just come into our lines as a deserter."

Mark was amazed. One of his men a deserter! who could it be? Perhaps Cully, alarmed for his safety, had ventured in

search of him? If so, it was a foolhardy action, which would result in the destruction of them both.

"Fool that I was to trust him!" was his inward reflection; "he always was an imbecile!"

He was not left long in doubt.

"Bring the fellow here, captain," said the colonel; "I would like to interrogate him."

The captain withdrew, and the colonel, turning to Mark, observed with a smile,

"You had a narrow escape, Gerald. If you had fallen in with this party you might have been captured."

"It is very probable," returned Mark. He thought there was a very strong prospect of his being captured now, as the deserter, intentionally or not, would be sure to betray his disguise.

Great was his astonishment, therefore, when Captain Gist brought Clam Dennis into the room. Of all the men he had left in the wood, he was the last he had expected to see. Knowing his old grudge against him, he felt that he would be betrayed the moment he was seen. Under pretence of fanning himself, he removed his cap, keeping his face concealed by it as much as possible.

"You scoundrel!" he muttered, "if I do get out of this, and you ever have the luck to fall into our hands, you shall swing, if I have to weave a noose for you myself!" Dennis, totally unconscious of this direful threat, stood with a broad grin upon his open countenance in the centre of the room.

"So, my man," began Colonel Rednarb, "you have got tired of fighting in the ranks of hirelings, and have come over to our side?"

"Yes, sir, av you plase," answered Dennis, looking highly gratified; "sure it's gintlemen ye are, and not spalpeens like Captin Van Phelther."

"A German evidently, by his name," remarked Colonel Rednarb to Captain Gist. "It is astonishing what numbers of foreigners there are in the Union army."

Mark laughed in his sleeve. Honest Van Pelter, as good a Jersey man as was ever weaned on clam soup, a foreigner! Was Colonel Rednarb so profoundly ignorant of the patronymics of the old Knickerbocker stock, or did he only pretend to be?

"How came you to desert, my man?" the colonel resumed, turning to Dennis.

"I had a bit of a trouble wid a spalpeen of a mate, called

Mark Brander," answered Dennis, scratching his head doggedly.

"Mark Brander!" exclaimed the colonel with an involuntary start. "Is there an officer on board the 'Pequot' of that name?"

"Sure there is! and he's the master's mate—bad luck to him!"

"Is he a young man?"

"Bedad! he's but a boy; but he's mighty strong in the arms."

"What is he like? Does he look like anybody you see here?"

Mark, attracted by some noise outside, got up and walked to the window, giving Dennis a full view of his back. But Dennis had his eyes on the colonel, and his attention was not drawn towards Mark.

"By my sowl!" he said, "he'd make just such a looking man as yourself when he grows older."

The colonel winced.

"So you quarrelled with this young man?"

"I did that. I owed him one for a ducking he gave me a while ago, and I paid him off. The captin sint six of us out on a schout, as he called it. Misther Mark and Plum Bird—that's mightily like Sam Cully—went on ahead and left us in the wood, and I was made cintry wid a rhifle in me hand, and I saw Mark Brander and Plum Bird coming down the road, and I up wid the rhifle and let her blaze, and Misther Mark gave a yell, and down he went like a log in the dust, and I jist dropped the rhifle and made tracks!"

The colonel started to his feet with a ghastly look upon his face, whilst Mark was horror-struck at hearing the fate which had befallen his prisoner.

"You murdered him!" gasped the colonel.

"Wasn't he an inimy?" said the miscreant. "Sure ye ought to reward me, and make me a captin for it."

"Pitiful whelp!" cried Mark, forgetting himself in his indignation, and turning full upon the deserter, "Do you come here with your hands red with a fellow-creature's blood, and ask a reward for murder?"

Dennis gave one yell as he beheld his face, went down upon his knees, clasped his hands, while his eyes dilated, his stubble hair stood on end, and his teeth chattered like dry seeds in a gourd. Never was there a picture of more utter and abject terror. It was almost ludicrous in its intensity.

"Howly vargin!" he screamed, "have mercy on me sowl! It's his ghost! Look at him glaring at me! Save me this time, and I'll never do it agin! Ough, ough! to think of his walking round wid a bullet in his head. Ough! blessed Saint Patrick! don't let him whisk me away!" And the wretch rolled over in superstitious terror, grovelling on the floor at Mark's feet.

It were hard to say which was the palest, Mark or the colonel. Both felt this tragedy in the keenest manner. The colonel noticed Mark's quivering lip and the fierce gleaming of the dark eye.

"I see you feel this matter deeply," he said. "It is strange! How mysterious is nature in its workings! This wretch's terror, at which you are doubtless surprised, is easily accounted for. His victim was that young man, who so greatly resembles you, that was seen by your mother and sisters in Beaufort."

Dennis was not so frightened but he heard these words and scrambled to his feet, the old look of dogged impudence coming back to his face.

"Thin it isn't his ghost after all?" he cried, advancing and looking at Mark curiously. But he shrank back again in doubt and terror. "By the vartue of me oath," he stammered, "I thought I shot Mark Brander, but there he stands alive this minnit."

"What is to be done with this wretch?" asked Mark. "Are we so much in want of men that we must recruit our ranks with murderers?"

"He is judged," returned the colonel sternly. "You little dream what good cause I have to pass sentence upon him."

He whispered to the captain, who nodded his head intelligently.

"Go," said the colonel to Dennis, "with that gentleman: he will see that you have your reward."

Dennis departed in a dubious state—his mind was not at ease.

"What disposition have you made of him?" asked Mark.

"I have told Captain Gist to get all the information he can out of him, and then order out a file of men and shoot him," answered the colonel.

A quarter of an hour after there was the report of a dozen muskets. It was the requiem of Clam Dennis.

CHAPTER XVII.

COLONEL REDNARB RELATES THE FOLLY OF HIS YOUTH.

"DOUBTLESS you are somewhat surprised, Gerald," said the colonel when they were left alone together, "that I should have evinced so much emotion at hearing of the death of this young man called Mark Brander?"

"Not at all," answered Mark; "your emotion does you credit. I am more conversant with this affair than you imagine. I know that this young man was my brother."

The colonel looked at Mark in amazement.

"Where did you learn that?"

"I have not learned it; I have but surmised it, from what I have heard my mother and your wife say."

The colonel thought that Mark was speaking of but one person, Mrs. Rednarb; but Mark did not mean her when he said "my mother."

"Am I not correct in my surmise?" asked Mark.

"Yes, my boy, you are," returned the colonel. "Sit down, light a fresh cigar, and I will relate to you the folly of my youth, that you may take counsel from it; for, be assured, my boy, the folly of youth always overtakes us in our age."

"Your grandfather, as you well know, was one of the wealthiest and proudest men in the State of South Carolina. I was his second son, and consequently was the recipient of but a small portion of his love, as he fairly idolized his first-born, my brother Gerald. My mother being dead, I was sadly neglected. Though two years my brother's junior, I was his superior in strength and stature. We did not agree well together, as he was arrogant and presuming, like all spoiled children. He offended me in some way—I forget exactly what now, but it was only a childish quarrel at the best—and I gave him a sound thrashing. He complained to my father, who, without investigating the merits of the case, punished me severely. This punishment rankled in my mind and made my home distasteful to me, and so I resolved to abandon it and seek my own livelihood. Having lived much of my life at Beaufort, and been very fond of boats and the water, and somewhat conversant with both, I naturally adopted a sea-faring life. I took passage to New York, changed my name to Mark Brander—which is

my name spelled backwards—and shipped before the mast on board of a merchant vessel.

"This new life pleased me. There was an exhilaration in the knowledge that I was independent, and my own master. By diligent application I rose to be mate; and while holding that position on board an emigrant ship, I encountered amongst the steerage passengers a young Scotch girl of great loveliness, with whom I became completely infatuated. I have wondered since what there was in her face that should have so completely enthralled my heart. It did not seem that life was worth the having without her. On our arrival in the port I married her, and for three years we lived together in great happiness, broken only by the intervals of my voyages,—for I was obliged to pursue the profession I had chosen for the means of subsistence. In this time a son was born to us, whom I called Mark; and Catherine gave promise of again becoming a mother.

"At this time I picked up a Charleston newspaper, in a reading-room which I was in the habit of frequenting, and there I read the death of 'Gerald, eldest son of Anthony Rednarb.' This was quite a shock to me, coming so unexpectedly. I was now the sole heir of my father's vast property. Strangely enough, in picking up the *New York Herald*, my eye fell first upon the column containing the 'Personals,' and among them was this advertisement,—

"'MARC ANTONY REDNARB:—Should this meet your eye, come home at once. Your brother Gerald is dead.

ANTONY REDNARB.'"

"I could not resist the appeal; and under pretext of making another voyage, I left my wife and child and took passage for Charleston. At that time I had every intention of making but a short visit and speedily returning; but circumstances changed my views and made a villain of me! That is the word, Gerald, as you will admit before I have finished."

The colonel paused and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief; this recurrence to his past life invoked no pleasant memories. Mark made no observations, but he began to have a better opinion of his father. He found that he had not been altogether heartless. He waited to hear the circumstances which had forced him to play a villain's part.

"On my arrival in Charleston," resumed the colonel, "I found my father in the last stages of a lingering illness. My place was by his side, and I could not desert him. Among the constant visitors at our house was the daughter of an old friend, Selma Middleton. I need scarcely describe your mother

to you, Gerald. She was an only daughter, and she heiress great wealth. My father had set his heart upon seeing us unite It was the ever-prevailing topic of his conversation. I was thrown constantly into the society of Selma, and I could perceive that I was not indifferent to her. This discovery flattered both my pride and vanity. On my father's death I knew I should succeed to his ample property, and become a man of weight in the community. An alliance with the wealthy heiress would greatly enhance my position; while, on the contrary, to have acknowledged my humble marriage, and brought on my wife, would have been little short of ruin. The aristocratic circle of my acquaintances would have repudiated the poor Scotch girl in contempt. I could never bring her there, that was certain.

"I was weak in my hour of trial, yielded a willing ear to the syren song of the tempter, ambition, and forgot all my early love, all the pure devotion of Catherine's trustful heart. Circumstances strongly favoured the dark design which had already begun to cast its shadow in my mind. I had married Catherine under an assumed name, in a far distant city. She was ignorant of my true name or the place of my nativity. She had neither means nor friends to assist her in ferreting me out; and should I never return, in all probability would consider me dead, and perhaps wed again,—compelled to do so by her necessities. There were fifty chances to one against the probability of our paths in life ever crossing each other, for I had determined to settle down in my native city, cast off my old wandering life with the assumed name, and become a steady citizen, and a power in my own community.

"I will not linger over the mental conflict I endured to bring my mind to that state of complacency so that I could consider my marriage with Catherine but a folly of youth, and deem myself free to espouse Selma Middleton. One circumstance swayed me more than any other. In one sense my marriage with Catherine was illegal. She was a Protestant, I a Catholic, and a Protestant minister united us. I think our courts would have set it aside on that plea, but I dared not apply for a divorce—that would have been a lasting stigma on our proud name.

"My father was sinking day by day, and I knew that it would smooth his passage to the grave to see me the husband of Selma. So I shut my eyes and rushed at the precipice. We were married by his bedside. He lived long enough to bestow his blessing upon us, and tranquilly expired. A happiness

beyond my merits and expectations was allotted me, and in the calm content that followed, so selfish is frail humanity, the past faded from my mind like an ill-remembered dream.

"Heaven, for some wise purpose of its own, sent this young man hither. I thought, when I heard of his strange encounter with your mother and sisters, that he might possibly come as the avenger of his mother, and I shuddered at the thought. His tragic death has dissipated that fear. He is removed from our path. If I feel a pang of remorse at his untimely end, you will forgive me, for in the sight of heaven he was as much my son as yourself, Gerald. The mother and the other child remain, whither a boy or girl I know not. They must be cared for, Gerald. If I survive this war I will provide amply for their future; if not, I leave that task to you—a sacred legacy."

"Have no fear, father," answered Mark, and his lips thrilled as he uttered that name, "it is a duty I will perform to the best of my ability."

The colonel grasped Mark's hand warmly, and appeared much gratified at the promptness of the reply.

"You resemble myself more than your mother," he said. "She feels exasperated at this marriage, which I was obliged to confess, and entertains a strong aversion towards Catherine and her children; yet that is but natural. She will rejoice in the knowledge of the poor boy's death."

Mark thought it highly probable, but he did not say so. He framed an excuse to withdraw, found the mulatto boy sunning himself on the verandah, ordered the horse, mounted, and rode out of the camp. When within a short distance of the place where he had posted his men, he dismounted, lashed the horse with his whip, and sent him flying back to the camp.

"That riderless steed will make Colonel Rednarb think that Lieutenant Gerald has been taken prisoner," soliloquized Mark. "And now to proceed cautiously. This Confederate uniform may bring me a bullet when I least expect it."

A walk of a few paces brought a challenge. He answered, and soon found himself grasped on either side by Justin Carnham and Plum Bird.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Justin, "we have found you alive."

"He's a plum bird on a lily root!" cried Plum in a state of exhilaration.

Walking with Justin, and answering his eager questioning, Mark returned on board the "Pequot," where he was seized upon by Captain Van Pelter and hurried into the cabin.

"By the Lord!" exclaimed the worthy captain, "but I never expected to see you again. Tell me all about it."

Mark gave a short, concise narration of his adventures in the rebel camp.

"Then that youngster is your brother after all," remarked the captain, when he had finished. "Poor fellow! his career was brought to a sudden close. There was a providential escape for you, Mark. It is rather a singular circumstance that he should have been killed in mistake for you. It looks almost like a judgment on your father. You can claim the estates down here, when we conquer them, which we intend to do in the shortest space of time possible. What shall we do with the body—send it back to the old man?"

"No," answered Mark; "it would be better to leave him in his error. It may be that I may have occasion to visit the rebel camp again, and this is a most excellent disguise."

"So it is. I never thought of that."

"I will bury my brother upon the shore, and so mark the spot that at some future time the body may be reclaimed and restored to the family."

"Act your own pleasure, while I send your information to the general."

In the silence of night, by the light of pine knots, Mark Brander and Plum Bird buried Gerald Rednarb beneath a palmetto tree on James Island. But no tears were shed over the mortal remains of one who, while living, was considered the fortunate heir of the proud families of the Rednarbs and the Middletons.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STEAMER "PLANTER."

Mark Brander had occasion to use his Confederate uniform sooner than he expected. Acting upon his information the general in command ordered an advance on Secessionville, Colonel Rednarb was found on the alert, and fell back with his regiment upon the intrenchments, where the Confederates were in force, and made a stand, while word was sent to Charleston for reinforcements.

Here ensued the disastrous affair to the Union troops, which is known in history as the battle of Secessionville. The Federals

were repulsed at all points, and driven back with great slaughter, leaving many of their bravest officers either dead upon the field or prisoners in the hands of the enemy. Amongst the latter Justin Carnham was supposed to be, as he was missing, and he had not been seen to fall.

Mark Brander begged Captain Van Pelter to allow him to penetrate into the rebel lines again, under his assumed character of Gerald Rednarb, and attempt the rescue of his friend. Permission was granted at once.

"By the way, Mark," said the captain, "I may as well tell you we are going to have a crack at Fort Sumter and Moultrie. So when you get ready to return,—for I have an idea that you will have to go into Charleston after your friend,—you will find the 'Pequot' lying off Charleston Bar; but, of course, you will keep this mum."

Mark thanked the captain for his information, donned his Confederate uniform, and was put ashore. He advanced boldly up the road, and soon encountered the rebel pickets. At his request he was conducted before the officer of the outpost. To his great joy, he discovered it to be Captain Gist.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the captain, advancing with outstretched hand. "My dear Gerald, we had given you up for dead!"

"Not so bad as that," returned Mark with a smile in keeping with his assumed character; "I have been in the enemy's hands, but have escaped, as you see."

"I rejoice to hear it. The colonel will be delighted; he has been very anxious about you. You will find him at his old headquarters, and your horse there, too, by the way. The colonel rode him in this last battle of ours, but he is none the worse for that."

Mark thanked the captain and walked on. He entered his father's presence unannounced, and the colonel started up with a joyful cry, clasped him in his arms, while the tears welled in his eyes. It was grateful to Mark's feelings to be thus received, even though he knew the affection was intended for another.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the colonel, "that I am permitted to see you again. The death of Mark has unmanned me and made me childishly apprehensive. I thought heaven might have deprived me of another son. 'Not for their own demerits, but for mine, falls slaughter on their heads.' The sins of the father are visited upon the children, we are assured by Holy Writ, and the knowledge of my guilt made me tremble for your safety.

Tell me how you were captured, and how you contrived to effect your escape."

Mark, expecting this question, had a little romance already invented for the purpose, which he now proceeded to relate.

"You must start at once for Charleston, Gerald," said the colonel, when Mark had concluded his fictitious narration, "to relieve your mother's and sisters' apprehensions, as they have the worst anticipations in regard to you. We have no need of you here, as the enemy will take some time before they risk another defeat. You know I told you they could not force our intrenchments."

In the course of the conversation that followed, Mark learned that the prisoners taken in the late battle had been sent to Charleston for safe keeping; consequently he made no objections to going there to see his "mother and sisters."

Isaac, for so he discovered the mulatto boy was called, brought around his horse. Isaac was provided with a shaggy pony, of that breed so common in the South, and thus attended, and bearing despatches to General Beauregard from the colonel, Mark set out for his journey to the cradle of secession, Charleston.

He arrived there without any adventure worth noting, and was surprised to see what desolation the great fire had made. The very heart of the city was in ruins. Skeleton chimneys and blackened, crumbling walls reared their burnt forms in the sunlight, and cows grazed on the grass and weeds that had sprung up in the places where lately stood the gay halls in which glittering gas-lights had "shone on fair women and brave men." It was a melancholy spectacle even to a foe. It reminded Mark of the old picture in the Roman history, of "Marius sitting among the ruins of Carthage." There was the Carthage, but where was Marius? Alas, for poor Charleston! The doom of Carthage was hanging over it, and its Marius was to be a negro regiment, in the Federal uniform, with gay banners and beating drums, marching through the ruined streets!

Isaac was much bewildered by his master.

"'Deed," he grumbled to himself, "he 's 'toxicated, or he 's done an' gone crazy. Why, he don't know nothing. He 's asking me de names of streets, an' whar de kurnel libs, jus' as if he'd never been here. De Lor' knows what 's come ober him."

Thanks to Isaac's superior knowledge, Mark had no difficulty in finding his way to Colonel Rednarb's house, a handsome, elegant mansion on Rutledge Avenue. He was received by

Mrs. Rednarb and Antoinette and Virginia like one arisen from the dead.

"You are much changed, from your captivity," said Mrs. Rednarb. "Your voice is altered, and you put me so much in mind of that Yankee sailor,—shall I never get him out of my head? I should think you were he, did I not know him to be dead. The colonel wrote me an account of his death. He seems to feel bad about it; but I think it was the most providential thing that could have happened."

Mark shivered a little. He felt a strange repugnance towards this woman; but, strange to say, this feeling did not extend towards her daughters. They were gentle and affectionate, lovely and loveable girls, and he felt a pride in his kinship towards them But he did not intend to linger long in their society. Making duty his excuse, he waited at once upon General Beauregard, and delivered his despatches.

He found the general affable and inclined to be chatty. He questioned him concerning his captivity and the treatment he had received. A sudden idea suggested itself to Mark. He made quite a pathetic story out of the kindness he had received at the hands of Captain Justin Carnham, told the general that he had heard he was a prisoner in Charlestown, and requested permission to visit him.

The general was very accommodating, sent for his adjutant, and made inquiries.

"There was a Captain Carnham, —th N. Y. Volunteers," the adjutant said, "confined in the old guard-house on the corner of Broad and Meeting Streets."

"That is the man," replied Mark.

"He is very sick—down with fever, and not expected to live," added the adjutant.

"General," said Mark, "I owe my escape, perhaps my life, to that man; suffer me to have him conveyed to my house, where he can receive due attention and proper nursing. I will be responsible for him."

"With all my heart," returned General Beauregard with urbanity; "let us not forget the amenities of life even in a state of war." He sat down and wrote the necessary order, and handed it to Mark. "Call again, my dear Rednarb," he said, "I shall always be pleased to see you. My compliments to your lady mother and charming sisters."

With proper acknowledgments, Mark took his departure. He had no fear of detection. The only thing that troubled him was the number of people he met that knew him, and the ques-

tions they asked which he could not answer. But Isaac, who followed at his heels like his shadow, was a wonderful help to him.

"Just keep your eyes open, Ike," said Mark, "and if you see anybody coming that knows me, just tell me their names sharp and quick."

The bewildered friends button-holed Isaac as Mark strode on with hasty steps.

"What 's the matter with your master?" they asked.

Isaac had formed a theory of his own, and he thus explained it:

"Why, you see, sar, in de last battle, de Lootenump done and gone and got hit on de head wid a musket butt, and bruck him memory bone."

With this lucid explanation the friends were satisfied. They construed it thus:—Gerald's brain was affected by a wound in the head. We question if Mark himself could have contrived any better excuse than this ingenious theory, emanating from Isaac's woolly pate.

Mark's first step was to tell the same pathetic romance with which he had entertained General Beauregard to Mrs. Rednarb, and obtain her permission to bring his sick friend to the house. He found no difficulty whatever in that: hospitality is a virtue strictly fostered in the South. His next was to install Justin in a nice, comfortable room, with plenty of air and light. The poor fellow was delirious when they removed him, and was unconscious of the presence of a friend. As he was rather good-looking, with his pale face, dark hair, and gleaming eyes, the twins took turns in watching him; and under their care he soon evinced a great improvement. True, he called their brother "Mark" in the first moments of returning health and consciousness, and appeared very much surprised at beholding him there; but they attributed that to the strong resemblance which had perplexed them all.

As soon as opportunity served, Mark informed Justin of the motive which had brought him there; and when the invalid became strong enough to walk, he began to look about for the means of escape. The blockading fleet lay off the bar, and the road to freedom seemed to be by water.

He strolled down to the wharves, in the hope that he might find a boat which he could appropriate, and some dark night row Justin out to the fleet. It was a long pull, with the chance of being seen and fired on by the rebel batteries; but, reared upon the water, Mark felt competent to the task: besides, even

if seen, the chance of being hit was slight. The greatest danger lay in being overtaken by one of the numerous steam-tugs that were plying about the harbour.

One day his attention was attracted by an old side-wheel steamer that lay at Frazer's wharf, where the rebels were busy erecting a battery to mount one of the big guns they had received from England. This steamer bore on her wheel-house the name of "Planter." Mark made some inquiries concerning her, and learned that she was commanded by a negro called Robert Small, and was used in conveying provisions and ammunition to Sumter, Morris, and Sullivan's Island. The idea suddenly suggested itself to Mark that the black captain of the "Planter" might be tampered with. He knew that the negroes had no great love for their masters, and flocked into the Union lines whenever they could do so in safety. The Emancipation Proclamation had exerted a great influence over the coloured population, and they were anxious to become "freemen."

He strolled on board—for the son and heir of Colonel Rednarb was a privileged person—and scraped up an acquaintance with Robert Small, a thick-set, middle-aged, intelligent "darkey." He found him apt when he came to sound him. He told him that there was no hope for the Southern Confederacy, and that he was anxious to desert and join the Union cause, taking with him a friend, a captain in the Federal army, who had been wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Secessionville, but was now convalescent; and if he (Small) would consent to run the "Planter" out of the harbour, with them on board, he should not only be well rewarded by them, but he would see that the boat should remain in his possession.

The black captain was fearful of a snare, and received the proposition coldly at first; but when convinced of Mark's sincerity, he consented to make the attempt. He knew the risk he ran, and suggested a shrewd plan to avoid suspicion. Mark and Justin were to disguise themselves as negroes, and come on board as fresh hands, as he was continually changing his crew. Then, if he was stopped by the batteries or rebel gunboats, nothing would be found on board to excite suspicion. He would procure some old clothes and a sufficiency of burnt cork for the purpose, which he would place in one of the old houses by the river, where they could make the requisite disguise, and then come on board.

Mark assented to the scheme at once, and it was all arranged between them. He hastened back to the house to acquaint Justin with his success.

"By Jove!" exclaimed he, "it's a capital idea—become members of the 'Burnt Cork Opera!' I've seen the Bryants often enough to do it to the life. I'm glad I'm going; for if I stopped here much longer I should be sure to fall in love with one of your pretty sisters."

"Which one?" laughed Mark.

"There's the deuce of it. They are both so lovely and so much alike that I couldn't make up my mind which. Don't you think I had better turn Mormon, and take them both?"

The plan was carried out as arranged, and one dark night the "Planter," with Mark and Justin on board, "fired up," cast loose from her mooring, ran out to the Union fleet, and Captain Robert Small was immortalized!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SKELETON.

THE appearance of Mark and Justin on board the "Pequot," with their sable visages, was the cause of much merriment among the officers and crew; and Justin, in the exuberance of his feelings, favoured them with an impromptu "break down." Being furnished with water and soap, they soon restored their faces to the natural hue. There was quite a large packet from the North awaiting Mark, addressed in the handwriting of Cecilia. Van Pelter invited them both into his cabin to take some refreshment.

"You must be thirsty," he said, "for I hear the Confederate whisky is perfectly awful! Your news is good news, Mark, and will keep awhile. You are sure of your 'anchor' now, my boy, so come and wet your whistle."

They followed the jolly old sea-dog into the cabin. He produced quite a display of bottles and glasses.

"Give it a name, my hearties! Here you have them—whisky, brandy, gin, champagne, sherry, or madeira. We made a glorious haul out of that last blockade-runner."

The captain paid his respects to the whisky, and Justin and Mark drank a bottle of champagne between them. Then Mark unsealed his packet. It contained another, addressed to Justin Carnham, in the handwriting of Captain Manly, and a note to himself, superscribed by Cecilia. He opened it eagerly, and his countenance fell as he perused it.

"Bad news?" asked the captain.

"Yes," answered Mark; "Captain Nelson Manly is dead."

A solemn silence followed these words.

"Peace to his memory, and a safe anchorage above!" cried Van Pelter breaking the spell; and he tossed off the balance of his whisky.

"Cecilia's note is very brief," resumed Mark; "she merely mentions the captain's death, after a gradual decline, in which he seemed to pine away like a sick infant, finally sinking into a lethargic slumber, from which he never awoke. Thus did the good old man tranquilly pass away. She requests me to hand this packet to you, Justin. It is from the captain."

"From the captain for me!" cried Justin, receiving the packet in great surprise.

He tore it open anxiously, glanced his eye over its contents, and appeared utterly dumbfounded.

"More bad news?" observed Van Pelter, as he mixed another glass of whisky. "It never rains but it pours. Who else has slipped his cable?"

"Mark," exclaimed Justin, with starting eyeballs, "*Nelson Manly killed my father!*"

"Impossible!" echoed his hearers.

"By heaven, here is his written confession, signed and witnessed. We are all friends here; listen, and be convinced."

"Stop!" said Mark; "there is one more must hear it. Allow me to bring Plum Bird here, captain."

"Who, then, is Plum Bird?"

"Samuel Cully!"

"Ah! I thought I knew the face. It appears he was unjustly accused after all."

"Bring him in," said the captain.

Mark went in quest of Sam, and soon returned with him. He took a seat on a sea chest. Mark resumed his place, and Justin Carnham began to read:—

"To Justin Carnham:—When I am dead and resting in the silent tomb, this paper will be placed in your hands. I write it for that purpose. I feel death's icy fingers closing gradually around my heart, and I cannot die with my guilt resting on another's shoulders. I killed your father. Samuel Cully is innocent of the deed, having no complicity in it whatever. Finding that he was alarmed at the charge against him, and fearful of proving his innocence, I assisted him to escape, thereby fixing a stigma upon his name, and screening my own

guilt. I have never felt a moment's peace since the fatal deed was committed; and it is only now, that I have prepared myself to make a full confession, that my mind regains some of its wonted tranquillity. You may wonder what cause of enmity there could have been between your father and myself. I must go back to an early part of my life to explain that.

"Your father, Hobart Carnham, and myself had been intimates and friends from childhood. I was some years his senior, but that made no difference in our intimacy. You will not wonder, then, that I should have introduced him with pleasure to my young sister, Cecilia. Words cannot describe how I loved that girl. She was all I had in the world—my sole surviving relative. I was one of those beings who are apparently born to remain bachelors. I had never seen one of the other sex who excited the least emotion in my breast. I had never thought of marriage; my entire stock of affection was lavished upon Cecilia.

"It used to afford me great joy to see her and Hobart together. They were a handsome couple; and I looked pleasantly forward to the day that would see them united. My occupation called me away for another long voyage. I sent Cecilia to the seminary, gave Hobart free permission to visit her, and sailed.

"I was gone nearly a year; and when I returned I was horrified at the information I received. Cecilia had fled from the seminary in company with Hobart Carnham. I could not understand the motive of this act. What need of flight, when they had but to await my return to gain my consent? I did not think of anything criminal in the first instance; but when I heard that Hobart had married, and not Cecilia, and was upon his bridal tour, my eyes were suddenly opened, and I became conscious of what had taken place.

"My first care was to find Cecilia. I was six months doing so; but I found her at last in a miserable tenement in Baxter Street. I found her, with an infant at her breast, in the last stages of a quick consumption, brought on by despair and privation. As I suspected, Hobart had betrayed and then abandoned her. I removed her and her infant at once to a more comfortable abode, but too late to save her. She lingered for a few weeks and then expired in my arms; but with her dying breath she made me promise never to seek to harm Hobart Carnham. She had been as much in fault as he. Though my blood boiled, and a fierce demon arose in my heart, whenever I thought of him, yet, as I have faith in heaven's

mercy, I firmly intended to keep that promise. But who can control the whirlwind of evil passions?

"When the last sad rites were performed for her whom I had loved so dearly, I took the infant, the new Cecilia, for so she had been named, and placed her with Mrs. Woodland, the wife of an old friend, to be brought up in quiet and seclusion. I gave out that she was my own child, the offspring of a marriage in a foreign clime—her mother being dead. The good woman never doubted my assertion, and under her fosterage the puny infant grew into a healthy, lovely girl. You will understand now why I refused your demand for Cecilia's hand,—she is your sister!

"Tired of my roving life, I longed for peace and quietness. My heart yearned towards my birthplace, and I came to Sea Cliff. I knew that I should meet Hobart Carnham there; but I thought that I had so schooled my passions in the lapse of years that I could do so tranquilly. But the fierce surge of passion that flooded all my veins at sight of him convinced me of my error. Strange that we are so weak against the Evil One. Warned by my feelings, I studiously avoided him.

"A new fear now assailed me; I saw that Hobart was struck by Cecilia's strong resemblance to her mother, and suspected his paternity. What if he should attempt to claim her, and take her from me. It was an insane fear, I know, but it strangely possessed my mind. He had stopped and questioned her closely. I heard of it from Cecilia, and the circumstance enraged me. It was while in this frame of mind that, taking my customary walk, I encountered Hobart Carnham, in the path across lots, returning from a night of carousal. Had he not been in liquor the tragedy I am about to relate would never have taken place.

"He dared to stop and question me about Cecilia. He asserted that she was his child, and I had no right to keep her from him; that I ought to allow him the privilege of her society at least; and if I did not he would proclaim that he had been privately married to my sister, and claim Cecilia as his child. He took a ring from his finger, and showed me the name 'Cecilia' engraved within. 'I will assert that this was our wedding ring, he said exultingly, 'and who can deny it?' I became enraged, and snatched the ring from him. He grasped me to regain it. Maddened and full of fury at his words, I wrested his cane from his hand and rained a shower of blows upon his head. Before I could realize what I had done, he lay dead at my feet. Entranced with horror, I dropped the cane

and sought to hide the body among the bushes. A bird, the sole witness of the fearful deed, chirped from a neighbouring tree. Alarmed at the sound, I fled in terror from the spot.

"Unconscious of my steps I found myself at home, but the ring which had been the innocent cause of murder was no longer in my possession. I had lost it on the way home. That was the ring which Doris Woodland found, and which Cecilia gave to Mark Brander.

"This is a true statement, as I hope for mercy before that tribunal to which I shortly expect my summons, and I sign it, being in sound mind, in the presence of these witnesses, in order that the imputation of guilt may no longer rest upon an innocent man."

"Here follows his signature," said Justin—"Nelson Manly—and it is witnessed by Doctor Fennel, Philinda Kohog, Cecilia Manly, and Doris Woodland."

It were superfluous to say that the reading of this document filled the different hearers with varied emotions of astonishment.

"I knowed he did it all along," exclaimed Sam Cully.

"You did!" cried they; "how did you know it?"

"Because I seed him do it," returned Sam.

"Saw him do it?" in another burst of astonishment.

"Yes; I left Goodtipple's with Squire Carnham that morning. We had had a lively night of it, and were both pretty tight; but I a great deal more than Hobe, as usual. When we come to the path across lots he concluded to take that way home. He got through the fence, and I followed, stubbed my toe, and fell down. I felt too lazy to get up just then, and he went on without me; but after a little while I got up and staggered after. When I came in sight of Hobe again he was talking to Cap'an Manly; and feeling ashamed to be seen with the Squire, after promisin' the captain so faithfully that I would reform, I slunk down out of sight behind the bushes, and there I heard and saw all.

"The moment the cap'an run away I made tracks myself, tolerably sobered and frightened by what had happened. Some how I kinder suspicioned that the affair would be taxed on to my shoulders, as I used to blow a great deal about what I would do to Hobe Carnham; but, bless you! I never meant any harm by it. So I went and hid myself in the woods, for I want going to split on the cap'an, nohow, and I kept shady until he helped me off."

"If you had come forward," said Mark, "you could not only

have cleared yourself, but your evidence might have been of great service to the captain."

"I was too frightened to think of that. I didn't want to get the cap'an into trouble. He was a good man, even if he did kill the Squire—so I jest kept out of the way until the cap'an helped me off,"

"What are we to do about this affair?" asked Justin in perplexity. "I have no desire to blacken Captain Manly's good name, and yet it seems unjust that you should rest under this stigma, Cully."

"Let it rest," answered Cully coolly. "Everybody in Keyport believes I did it, and what is the use in raking over the affair, and disturbin' the cap'an in his grave. He's answered for it before now, sir, and squared his account. He was good to me, though I was an old vagabond. Let it rest—I've had a bad name all my life, and it is no use trying to whitewash my character now. I know I didn't do it, and you know I didn't do it,—conscience is all right, and so let it rest."

And they concluded to let the affair rest, in accordance with this self-abnegating advice.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

WERE we to enumerate the various adventures that befell our characters in their warfare along the southern coast, and in their participation in the heroic struggles which placed Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington once more beneath the stars and stripes, it would occupy more pages than we have already written. We have only space to chronicle the last exploit of Samuel Cully.

The "Pequot" formed one of Admiral Porter's squadron in the attack on Fort Fisher,—in all points the most desperate and severe fight of all the war,—and a portion of her crew was in the Naval Brigade that assaulted the sea front of that strong fortification. Mark Brander and Samuel Cully were among the number.

It was a desperate undertaking, but the gallant tars were determined to plant the Admiral's flag upon the walls. Amid fire and smoke they went, exposed to a perfect storm of lead and iron missiles, cheering and encouraging each other as their numbers lessened under that deadly rain, and foremost in the

throng went the tall form of Samuel Cully, his shrill voice loudest of all. He reached the wall close behind Lieutenant Porter, who bore the flag in his hand. That gallant leader sank in death upon the very parapet, and the flag went down with him, but Sam seized it in a moment, reared it in the air, and with a wild yell the tars swept onward. The parapet was gained and the foe hurled back, disheartened and dismayed, for the tidings reached them that the land forces were capturing traverse after traverse in a victorious progress, impossible for the Confederates to stop. One last volley they fired as they retired, and the tall form of Sam Cully wavered, tottered, and fell.

Mark rushed to his side and supported his head upon his knee. He saw at a glance that all was over—the brave fellow was riddled with bullets.

At that moment a deafening shout pierced the dun and smoky atmosphere. Fort Fisher was won. Sam's eyes opened, and he gazed wildly around.

"Hello, Mark!" he gasped; "hev we won the fort?"

"We have," answered Mark.

"Hooray, for our side! Darn 'em! we've whipped 'em so they can't back out of it this time, haint we?"

"We have indeed; but our victory has cost us dear. I am afraid you are badly hurt."

"I know it—peppered considerably—I've got my walking ticket this time, but I'm ready to go. The old vagabond has been of some use after all, haint he?" His voice grew weaker, and the blood oozed slowly from his mouth. "Say, Mark," in a whisper, "don't say nothin' 'bout the cap'an being concerned in that Hobe Carnham affair; let 'em still think I did it. He was a good man, was Cap'an Manly, and he tried to make a good man out of me; but 'twarn't no use—the soil was too barren. Let 'em think I did it; keep his memory pure; it won't hurt me when I'm dead and buried. Good-by, Mark! you're a plum bird on a lily root, you are, and this plum bird is going to roost."

Samuel Cully never spoke again. Mark laid the cold head slowly down and wept like a child. They buried him in the sand beneath the walls which he had so gallantly helped to win, and there the poor outcast sleeps in peace.

The "Pequot" was ordered back to Charleston, and when the city was occupied by the Federal troops, Mark went ashore to learn, if possible, some tidings of Colonel Rednarb and his family.

The house on Rutledge Avenue was abandoned and desolate, and he learned that on the evacuation of the city by the Confederates, Mrs. Rednarb and her daughters had removed to Columbia. The colonel himself had been killed at the battle of Averysboro'. It was not without emotion that Mark heard this sad intelligence. It almost seemed as if a retributive justice had overtaken Colonel Rednarb. His own and son's life had been offered up as sacrifices at the altar of war, and his wife and daughters were homeless fugitives. It was a sad picture to contemplate.

Mark met familiar faces in the city,—faces that he remembered having seen at Mrs. Rednarb's house when he was supposed to be Gerald; but they glanced at his uniform,—he was now a lieutenant,—with a shudder, and coldly passed him with the merest recognition. He marvelled much at this until one day he met Isaac in the street wearing the uniform of a sergeant in the United States Coloured Troops.

"What, mas'r Gerald!" exclaimed Isaac, bewildered into the old form of salutation by the suddenness of the encounter. "Dat is, you aint my mas'r now, you know, cause I'se one of Abe Linkun's sogers, and a freeman."

Mark laughed at the pomposity of the boy, and then tried to explain his identity to him. But that was a more difficult feat than he expected.

"Yes, I know," returned Isaac; "you went away wid de capun, an' joined the Union boys; yes, I know. Kunel and de ladies felt drefful bad 'bout it,—de ole madam went nigh distracted, an' said she'd never acknowledge you agin as a chile ob hers."

Then Mark understood all. His assumed character had never been discovered, and the colonel had died in the belief that his son had deserted to the enemy, thus affixing an ineffaceable disgrace upon his name and family. How was he to convince the survivors that it was Gerald who had been killed, and that he had merely borne his name? He tried to impress the fact upon Isaac's dull brain, described to him the place of Gerald's burial, and charged him, should the family return to the city after peace was established, which event was now daily expected, to acquaint them with the particulars. Isaac promised faithfully to attend to his behests, but Mark could see by the strange rolling of the whites of his eyes that the mulatto boy was in an utter state of mental befogment, and he began to see that Gerald Rednarb would be left to sleep in his honoured grave, and he should be considered the rightful owner of that name so long as he re-

mained in Charleston. He also comprehended the coldness of those acquaintances he had made when he came to effect the escape of Justin Carnham.

There was no help for it, as he could see. Mrs. Rednarb and her daughters might never cross his path again; nor did he wish it. They had powerful and wealthy friends who would assist them, and he would use what little influence he possessed to have the property in Charleston restored to her. He did not want it; his hopes of happiness were centered in the North, and he looked ardently forward for the end of the war, that he might return to her whose bright image had been his beacon in the midst of storm, and darkness, and danger.

The time came at last. The "Pequot" was discharged from her commission, and Mark and Justin (now a colonel) came home together in the "Arago."

Their arrival created a great sensation at Sea Cliff, and Philinda made the most extensive preparations in her culinary department.

"Mercy's sakes!" she said; "the Lord knows, we are glad enough to have you back—three lone wimen living all alone! We did miss the capting dreffful bad. There 's his old pipe over the mantelpiece in his little room, and every time I go in there to tidy up a bit, the sight of it brings the tears right into my eyes. You don't mind Justin kissing Cecilia, Mark, do you? He's her brother, you know. That was what used to give the capting the spasms—awful bad he had 'em too; the paragoric I used to give him,—Doctor Fennel said it was 'lordynum,'—but, good Lord! these doctors don't know much. Doris said it was our 'household skelington'—she always does have the strangest names for things. I knowed it all along; but it warn't for me to gossip the capting's secrets."

"Well, that 's odd, aunty," laughed Justin. Why were you so anxious to have me marry Cecilia, then?"

Philinda turned quite red, and looked a little bewildered.

"Lord, you torment!" she cried. "I was only joking." But she looked rather crest-fallen, and her volubility was checked for a time. As Justin expressed it, he had "choked the old woman off."

As there was nothing to interfere, preparations were at once commenced for the marriage of Mark and Cecilia. The captain had left his property, except the amount loaned to Justin, which he bequeathed to him as a legacy, equally divided between Mark and Cecilia, knowing that their marriage would reunite it.

Justin put his own house in order, and was very busy there,

though he spent a great deal of his time at Sea Cliff; and it perplexed Doris exceedingly to determine what he was about.

They had corresponded constantly, and met like old friends,—he taking advantage of his brotherly compact with her to kiss her cherry lips in a very ardent manner, at which Doris had grown a little shy, though she was by no means displeased.

One day,—it was summer again,—he found Doris sitting on the balcony, very busy at her sewing. So he drew a chair along and sat down beside her.

"What are you at work on now?"

"Cecilia's wedding-clothes," she answered. "I am helping her to get ready."

"They have set the time, then?"

"Yes; three weeks from to-morrow. We couldn't get ready before. I'm to be bridesmaid."

"And I'm to be groomsman. We'll stand by them to the last, and do our duty like—heroes!"

"Pshaw! don't joke. You don't know what you may come to yet."

"What most men come to, I expect. Do you know, Doris, I can understand my passion for Cecilia now. I don't think I was in love with her after all; it was only brotherly affection."

"I have thought so all along."

"Have you? You're a clever little woman, Doris. I've often thought you'd make some man a capital wife."

"Have you?"

"Yes, really. How do you like this neighbourhood, Doris?"

"Well enough to live and die here."

"How do you like me?"

Doris dropped her work in her lap, and looked up at Justin.

"Havn't you found out yet?"

He hitched his chair nearer, and put his arm around her waist.

"Do you know, I have a capital idea?"

"What is it?" asked Doris, with the most innocent air in the world.

"Suppose you and I get married with Mark and Cecilia?"

"Oh, wouldn't that be nice!"

"I made up my mind to have you a year and a half ago."

"And I made up my mind to have you, if I could get you, the first time I saw you."

"Then it's a bargain?"

"Signed and—"

"Sealed!" finished Justin, with a sounding kiss upon her lips.

"Good Lord!" cried Philinda, popping her head out of her window, "what air you two doing?"

"Making more work for you, Philinda," cried Doris. "You'll have to cut out some wedding-clothes for me now."

"I knowed it, and I alwus said it. I knowed that you and Cecilia would be married on the same day."

And they were.

Edinburgh, August 1892.

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